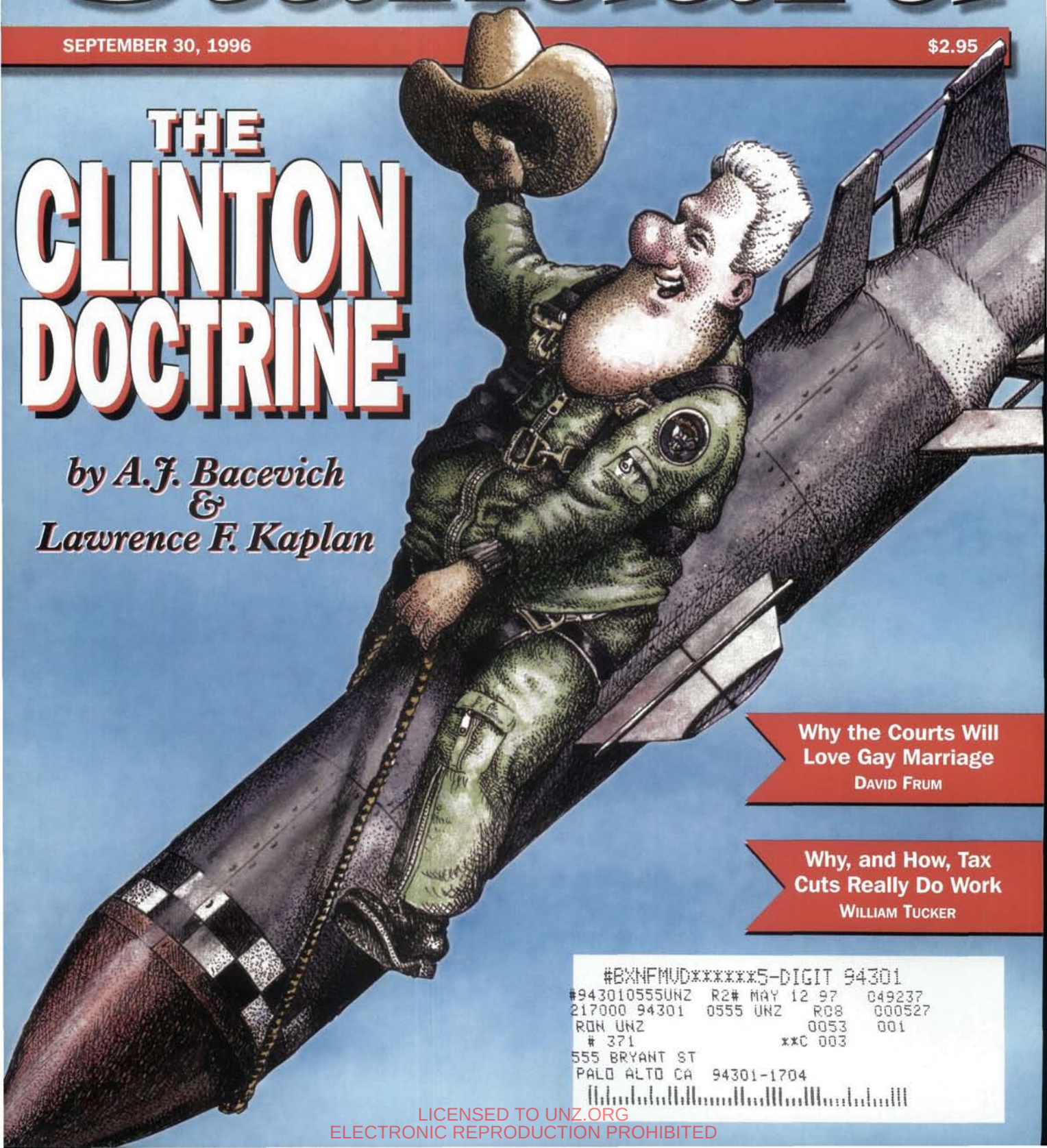
the weekly
Standard

SEPTEMBER 30, 1996 $2.95

EDITORS I HAVE LOVED AND HATED—INCLUDING ME
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

THE CLINTON DOCTRINE

by A.J. Bacevich & Lawrence F. Kaplan



Why the Courts Will Love Gay Marriage
DAVID FRUM

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WILLIAM TUCKER

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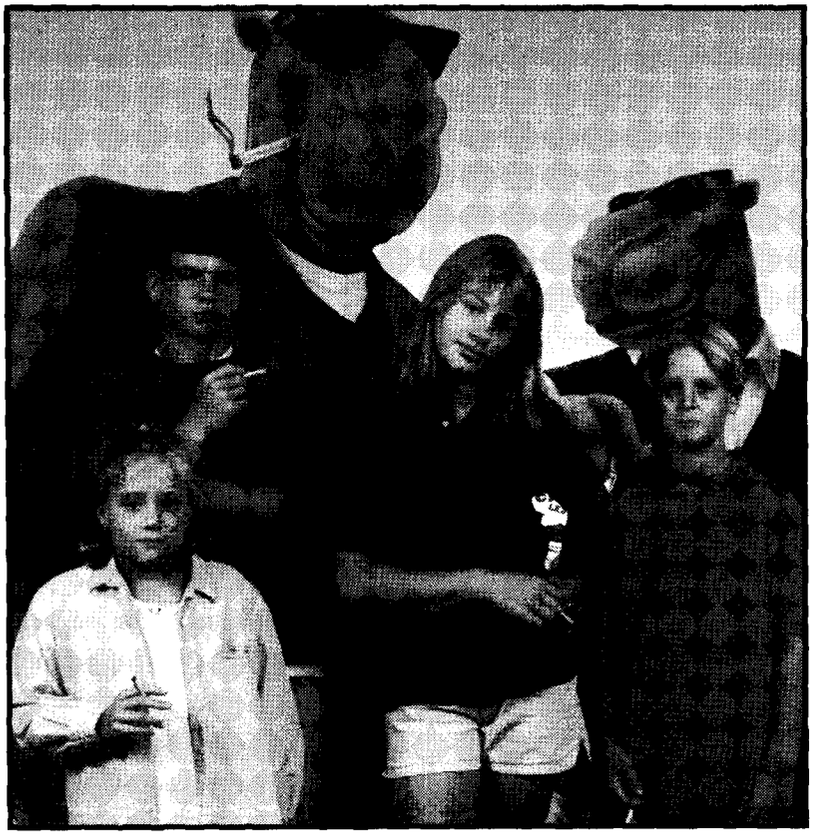
If the 104th Congress is about "common sense," it will support FDA's rule to save millions of kids from tobacco.



Here are the facts:

- Each day, 3000 kids start smoking; one-third will die prematurely from their addiction
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- Evidence shows that tobacco companies purposely target advertising and promotions to kids

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John-John, Farrakhan, Jack, and Jude

Dateline Chicago. "As I reached the front door, another man offered polite greetings and escorted me to a small anteroom, where he provided me with a pair of white ankle socks." *George* editor in chief John F. Kennedy, Jr. puts on those ankle socks—"footsies," his subject calls them—and proceeds, in his magazine's October 1996 issue, to conduct a remarkable and repellent interview with "alleged anti-Semite" Louis Farrakhan.

"The striking thing about Louis Farrakhan, 63," *George* reports, "is that he seems exceedingly gentle." It gets worse. Farrakhan compares himself to Christ. Kennedy says nothing. Farrakhan claims that 2,000 Christian leaders love him but won't admit it publicly because they are "so frightened by what Jewish people and financial contributors will think."

Here, Kennedy offers the minister some advice:

"Why do you single out Jews? Lots of white folks give you the business." Kennedy does it again a few paragraphs later: "Why make a distinction for Jews? White people of all stripes have been guilty of racial intolerance." And again: "You must know that the whole notion of Jewish control is extremely loaded. . . . Why not speak [simply of money and political influence generally] and save yourself a lot of grief?" And again: "Why do you single them out?"

Finally, Farrakhan catches Kennedy's drift and makes nice. "I'm reminded of watching Yitzhak Rabin's grandchildren at his funeral," Farrakhan remarks. "I was very moved." "It was moving," JFK, Jr. replies. After which, the two men exchange thank-yous, and the footsies come off.

This is not the only heart-sinking Farrakhan encounter of the month. In an interview with Michael Rezendes for the September 8 *Boston Globe*, Jack Kemp made the classic (and wrong-headed) message-versus-messenger distinction for Farrakhan. Kemp called Farrakhan's message "wonderful." Last year's Million Man March, according to Kemp, "was a celebration of responsible fatherhood, individual initiative, of not asking the government to do everything for you, and getting the opportunity to be the man that God meant you to be." Kemp "would have liked to have been invited to speak."

Where on earth did Kemp get the lunatic idea that necessary Republican outreach to black Americans might in any responsible way have something to do with Louis Farrakhan? From Jude Wanniski, we're told.

In a memorandum dated two days after Kemp's *Boston Globe* interview appeared, Wanniski called the GOP vice-presidential candidate "the most popular white national political leader in either party." Translated from Wanniski-speak, this means Kemp is the most prominent American political leader who still regularly talks to Wanniski on the phone.

Wanniski, credited with helping to give birth to supply-side economics, is a Morristown, N.J.-based economics consultant with some peculiar enthusiasms and a very busy fax machine. He also calls Kemp's Farrakhan maneuver "the best news I'd seen from the campaign in a week" and the "kind of dynamic that is required for the Dole/Kemp ticket to close the gap with Clinton."

Here's an idea. The Dole/Kemp ticket now suffers an enormous gender gap in the polls. John F. Kennedy, Jr. is enormously popular with women. So Jack Kemp should agree to do an interview with *George*. And Jude Wanniski should do his own footsie-kissing with Farrakhan—and leave Kemp alone. *That* would be the best news we've seen from the campaign in a lot more than a week.

They Just Don't Get It

The Dick Morris story, according to a September 15 *Washington Post* Outlook section essay by Sally Quinn, casts another harsh spotlight on the "shameless male culture" of the nation's capital. Quinn says the men she interviewed on the subject are inclined to "shrug off" Morris's involvement with a prostitute, his illegitimate child, and his subsequent lucrative book deal. But the "high-powered women who live and work in Washington," Quinn reports, see things very differently—former Clinton campaign and White House media consultant Mandy Grunwald, for example.

Grunwald tells Quinn that the Morris story "confirms the voters' view of Washington, that it's full of people with no morality about how they spend people's money and conduct their lives." Washington men, says Grunwald, can't see the Morris incident for what it is: "ugly, sordid, squalid" and "so distasteful when you read the specifics." Washington men are *always* like

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this. Remember Bob Packwood? "I spent a lot of time on Packwood," Grunwald tells Sally Quinn. "I wrote an ad and it took me weeks to convince someone to run it. It was shocking. If your boss stuck his tongue down your throat would he keep his job? Only in Washington."

Gee, Mandy. Three eyewitnesses have testified in sworn legal documents that *your* former boss once arranged to meet a young woman in a hotel room, where one of those eyewitnesses says he dropped his trousers and asked the woman to perform a sexual act. And he still has *his* job—as president of the United States. How come Mandy Grunwald doesn't think that's a problem? Only in Washington.

Clinton Spots a Hungarian on Sight

At the conclusion of Bill Clinton's September 15 speech in Indianola, Iowa, he boasted that America is special because people of different ethnic groups are able to live in harmony. "You look around this crowd today," said Clinton, noting that there were "Asian Americans" and "African Americans" in the audience. Yes, but then Clinton also noted that there were Nordic Americans, Irish Americans, German Americans, and "Americans of Central European descent." That's a clever way of saying there were a lot of Caucasians in the crowd—not surprising, considering Clinton was in *Iowa*. But we have to wonder what it was that led Clinton to identify some people as having German ancestry, and others Central European ancestry. Does he have some special ethnographic perception—a visual acuity similar to Henry Higgins's ability to discern the location of a speaker's street merely by accent? Why not Scotch-Irish? Why not Finno-Ugaritic? Is there no limit to this president's blather?

A New Advertising Low

In a full-page ad in the September 16 *New York Times*, the New York teachers' union, the United Federation of Teachers, took a slap at Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's plan to send 1,000 of the public schools' most troubled students to parochial schools—and did so in the most dishonest piece of advertising we've seen in years.

The mayor has a problem with a public-school bureaucracy that graduates only 25 percent of its students and whose students score almost 300 points below the national average on the SAT. So Giuliani accepted an offer from Cardinal John O'Connor, who years ago challenged the city's public-school monopoly by offering to give a better education to 1,000 public school kids at less than one-third the cost of public school.

Predictably, the UFT opposes the idea, even though private donors will pay the bills. But what makes its ad unique is the clear effort to deceive readers into believing that the union's position on school reform is supported by an ideologically diverse group of prominent Americans. Henry Kissinger, Colin Powell, and William Safire are among the 69 names listed in boldface down the left margin of the ad, which clearly suggests their endorsement of the ad's attack on the parochial-school plan. Only on closer inspection could one discover that the list is merely famous people who went to New York City public schools.

That's amazingly cheesy, even for a teachers' union.

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Casual

It Takes a Writer To Exploit a Child

My three-year-old daughter not long ago got a toy doctor's kit, and the other night she took it upon herself to give me a check-up. With the plastic scope she peered deep into my ear canal.

"Well, Dad," she announced, gravely, "you've got *some* brains, but not too many."

It was a lovely moment, the kind that all parents remember forever, but let me tell you something. I am now going to shift scenes, and allow you to see how the mind of a hack writer works.

Seconds after my daughter spoke I remembered a lunch I had several years ago with a columnist friend, who is widely admired for his lapidary dissections of public policy. He was looking unusually glum.

"I just did something I told myself I'd never do," he said.

"Oh?" I prepared to wince at some grisly confession. Had he cheated on his wife? Colored his hair? Answered an e-mail from Roger Stone?

"I actually wrote a column about my kids."

I knew at once what he meant. There are many cheap tricks that a columnist, no matter how casual or familiar, should do his damnedest to avoid—lapsing into ethnic dialect, for example, or inventing fictional cab drivers, or quoting Tocqueville. And writing about your kids tops the list. It doesn't matter how cute they are; all kids are cute—though this may change after Madonna has her baby. When you drag them into your columns you become the journalistic equivalent of the barroom drunk who won't put the pictures back in his wallet.

So—to return to my daughter the doctor—instead of simply savoring this instance of her sempiternal cuteness, I began calculating whether I could use it in a piece of writing and thereby, not to be too crass about it, make it pay.

But I recalled my friend's comment and dismissed the possibility. I resolved not to exploit an intimate moment in such a way. And then this deadline, the one that I face right now, came roaring up. You can see how successfully I kept my vow.

This is not the first time I've mined my most treasured personal relationships for reasons of vulgar professional expediency, nor will it be the last, but even apart from questions of taste, I think it's a bad habit to get into. And I should know, having often fallen into it myself. I've made the mistake before of agreeing to write columns at regularly scheduled intervals, and I inevitably discover, with the hot breath of a deadline on my neck, that I have absolutely nothing to say. The result: I stalk around the house like Jack Nicholson in *The Shining*. With my editor holding on the other line, inquiring after my overdue column, I stare at my kids and think, "Do something cute, dammit." And when they do at last do something cute, I fret: "But is it cute enough to use?" Friends bring their kids over and I envy them if their kids are doing cuter things than mine are. I start wondering whether I can write off their food and clothing as a business expense. It's a bad habit to get into, as I say.

And it's catching, too. Politics has always been a carnival of kid-exploitation, of course, but it has lately reached new heights, or depths. President and Mrs. Clinton, much to their credit, have exploited their own daughter only as much as is necessary and not a bit more, but here as elsewhere they are innovators. By dropping hints that they may adopt after the president's reelection, they have managed to exploit a kid before the kid has even been born. At least Bill Paxon and Susan Molinari, the Ken and Barbie of the Republican Congress, waited till parturition before they began wringing every last drop of publicity out of their new daughter. They even carried her onto the podium after Mom's speech at the Republican convention. By puberty, the poor kid will probably pass out every time she sees a camera.

If Bill and Susan keep at it, they too may someday sink as low as James Carville and Mary Matalin, whose baby has already been put through more photo shoots than Kate Moss. The kid came in extra handy recently when the Battling Bickersons of the Beltway posed for an American Express ad. There were James and Mary surrounded by all kinds of neat stuff that they (presumably) got with their American Express card: a fax machine, a shredder, a lawn mower, and—Hey! Look!—a baby! Gosh, those American Express cards are useful. Try getting a cutie like that with your Visa.

Even I—*even I*—felt my stomach heave at James and Mary's latest adventure in self-promotion. And as my daughter can confirm, I have some scruples, but not too many.

Andrew Ferguson

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We're Tough on Crime

John J. DiIulio, Jr.'s criticism of the Clinton administration's crime-fighting record is wrong on several counts ("How to Deal with the Youth Crime Wave," Sept. 16).

Misinterpreting one line in an initial Justice Department legal brief, DiIulio says the department is gutting the recently enacted Prison Litigation Reform Act by contending that any prison that violates a judicial order of any kind should continue to be supervised by the courts. We never intended that to be our position, we expressly said so to the courts in subsequent filings in each case where that brief was filed, and we have explicitly rejected that position in every case since. Prof. DiIulio may not have seen all of these briefs—but we would have provided them if he had asked about the issue. The Justice Department supports the Prison Litigation Reform Act and is defending it in court against constitutional challenges brought by prisoners-rights groups.

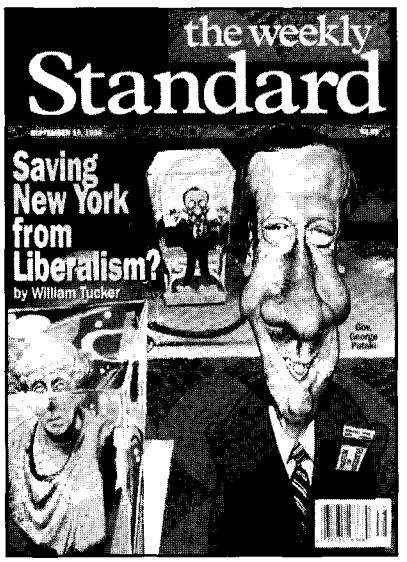
The attack on President Clinton's 100,000-police-on-the-street program is also misleading. In the first two years of a six-year program, we have funded nearly half of those 100,000 community police. But police hiring never happens overnight—unless you want underqualified, undertrained recruits. About 20,000 federally funded police are on the beat now, with more coming on every week. This program is an unqualified success—which is why it is supported by every major law-enforcement organization in the country. We are ahead of schedule in putting 100,000 police on our streets, and we will get there.

Finally Prof. DiIulio insinuates that some political conspiracy was behind the release of the FBI's data showing the first drop in juvenile violent-crime arrest rates in seven years. There was no such conspiracy. Police chiefs and mayors kept telling Attorney General Reno that they were seeing progress against youth crime, she asked the FBI to check into it, and when it did she announced the results.

We are proud of our crime-fighting record, and objective measures show it is making a difference. New data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, for example, show a 9 percent decline in violent crime from 1994 to 1995. There is still plenty of room for debate about crime-fighting programs, but it should be based on fact, not errors and misinterpretation.

JOHN R. SCHMIDT
ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, DC

JOHN J. DIIULIO, JR. RESPONDS: With due respect, Mr. Schmidt's response is disingenuous and misleading on every count. Before I wrote the essay, I read several of the Department's anti-Prison Litigation Reform Act motions (not just its "initial legal brief") and a high-



ly critical analysis of the same by the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG). In testing my own observations (I am not a lawyer, but it seemed clear from what I read that Justice was purposely undercutting both the letter and the spirit of the PLRA), I consulted several people, including the one who knows most about the PLRA and its stunted implementation, Pennsylvania Corrections Department general counsel Sarah Vandenbraak, who in the early 1990s spearheaded the PLRA effort for the National District Attorneys Association. In addition, I reviewed Mr. Schmidt's own testimony before the Senate, plus other materials and news reports on the Clinton administration's official position on the reform.

Since my story ran, and in concert with pressure brought by NAAG and others, Justice has backed off some, but not all, of its most underhanded anti-PLRA legal maneuvers and arguments. I would be glad to introduce Mr. Schmidt to governors, other state and local leaders of both parties, and career law-enforcement officials to whom I have spoken. They would join me in disputing outright his blanket statement that the Department is now "defending" the PLRA.

Mr. Schmidt asserts that about "20,000 federally funded police are on the beat now." I guess that's progress. Until recently, the administration was asserting that the program had already put over 40,000 more cops "on the beat."

It would have been truer, however, had Mr. Schmidt also confessed that the 20,000 new cops include not only new hires but redeployed personnel; that the program's funds have been spread for purely political purposes across hundreds of jurisdictions (which Sen. Joseph Biden scolded me for failing to be realistic about when I testified before him that the program's effectiveness would be compromised unless its resources were concentrated so as to permit "saturation community-based policing" of high-crime neighborhoods); that not even the outside "experts" who remain in favor at Reno Central will argue that the 20,000 have yet had any measurable effect on crime rates; and that New York City, which alone accounts for about a third of the crime drops since 1993, experienced the drop without adding more cops.

Mr. Schmidt suggests that Reno's premature release of good-news crime data on August 8 was purely in response to requests by local police who wanted to know whether the progress they were sensing was for real. What a charming tale; it had nothing whatsoever to do with the pre-convention cycle. And I suppose that the release of more good-news crime data on September 16—the day of the dueling crime speeches by Clinton and Dole—was not politically timed, either.

In other words, I suppose that Mr. Schmidt is thereby answering, in the negative and for the public record, one of the many questions that I posed in my article, namely, Was the timing, production, or release of data conditioned

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in any way by White House political operatives or done in conjunction with the president's reelection drive?

I would be more inclined to accept this stunning double coincidence if Mr. Schmidt, or, better, his boss, the attorney general, would plainly state the following truths, and release the following data, at a press briefing to be held on the same day as the president's next crime speech:

1. There are not 100,000 new cops on the beat thanks to Bill Clinton, and that program has had no known effect on crime rates.

2. The Brady Bill, which Reno has credited repeatedly for drops in crime, banned 19 assault weapons. But those weapons figured in only an infinitesimal amount of crime in the first place, and many of them are now available in modified form. Moreover, as a number of analysts have argued conclusively, the Brady Bill's background-checking system is full of holes.

3. The national crime-victimization data released on September 16 were preliminary estimates. The data indicated that between 1994 and 1995 violent crimes fell by 9.9 percent, from 10.9 million to 9.9 million, and that property crimes fell by 5.5 percent from 31 million to 29.3 million. But before 1995, the same agency that compiled these data, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), counted well under 7 million violent crimes for 1992. After redesigning its survey instrument, it counted about 10 million violent crimes for 1992. The new survey instrument is more accurate. But before BJS released its first summary of the new survey data, and before the vintage '96 champagne got uncorked to celebrate the decline to 9.9 million violent crimes, no one had ever counted as many as 7 million violent crimes in a single year. The Justice Department erred in not publicizing the fact that the federal government had for years been unintentionally undercounting violent crimes in America by as much as 50 percent.

4. Recent federal and other data show that drug use is up substantially among young people, and for reasons that Sen. Biden and the administration's own new drug czar, Gen. Barry McCaffery, have indicated, including the Clinton administration's substantial cuts in federal anti-drug efforts, both at the borders and on the streets.

Or, if Justice Department officials prefer, let them just put it as follows: The probability that the administration's cops and guns programs have caused the drops in crime we so much enjoy reporting is about equal to the chance that a hurricane that blows through a Washington, D.C., cement factory will leave an exact replica of the Lincoln Memorial in its wake.

Doubting Pataki

William Tucker's piece "Who Is George Pataki?" (Sept. 16) deserves perspective that the article does not offer. The so-called dramatic tax cut launched by Pataki is little more than the long-delayed third year of the tax plan introduced by Mario Cuomo. The New York personal income tax rate is still higher than that of contiguous states. Business taxes have remained intact. In fact, the effective capital gains rate in New York is 40 percent.

The 1996-97 budget of $66 billion is the largest in the state's history, with "one-shots" and borrowing from the state pension fund that Pataki, as candidate, deplored. Despite the claim that spending declined in 1995 "for the first time since 1943," spending actually increased if "off-budget" expenditures are included in the total budget, as they should be.

The job increases to which Tucker refers represent a small and disproportionately lower total than increases in the rest of the nation.

The death penalty in New York for which the governor is given credit does not include first-degree murder. In other words, unless a murderer engages in serial killing, torture, or the murder of a police officer, capital punishment does not apply.

This same "conservative" governor vowed to lead the charge against the pro-life plank in the Republican platform. And now this "conservative" governor has introduced an environmental bond issue of $1.75 billion that will increase state indebtedness—already the highest in the nation per capita—another $2.5 billion.

That there has been some positive change in New York is undeniable. But to describe Pataki as the state's most genuinely conservative governor makes sense only if he is compared with Mario Cuomo and, even then, only if he is compared selectively.

Herb London
New York, NY

CCRI and David Duke

In the Scrapbook item "Tarring CCRI With the David Duke Brush" (Sept. 16), you rightly denounce the invitation extended to David Duke to make the case against racial preferences. Duke's appearance, however, helps to illustrate the common ground he shares with opponents of CCRI: Both are in favor of subordinating the merit principle to achieve their desired racial outcomes in academia and the work force. Their only significant difference is the color of the finished product—white or rainbow.

Allan J. Favish
Tarzana, CA

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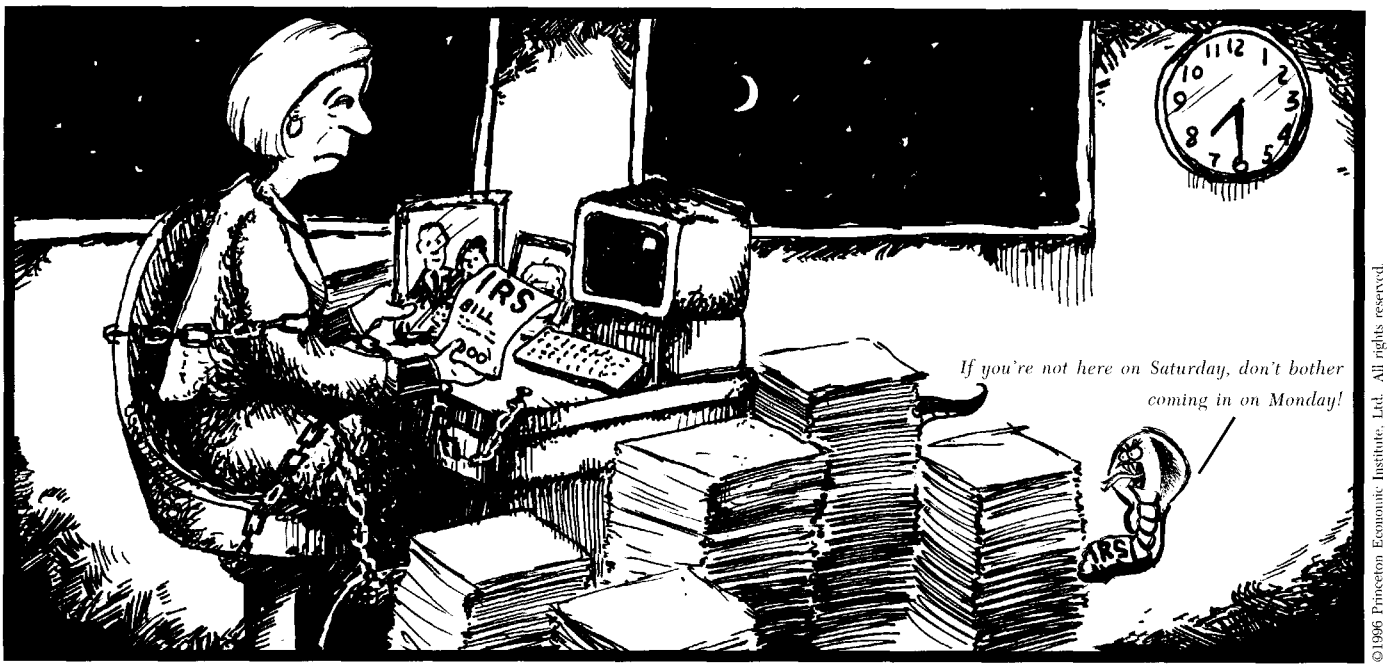

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Our income tax chains mothers to a job — and threatens our right to economic liberty.

While we argue about taxing the rich, nobody ever defines who the rich really are. According to the IRS, that definition was an annual income of $5 million in 1940. By 1992, that moved down scale to a very blue-collar $52,500. As the debate over making sure the rich pay their "fair" share rages on, we are ignoring the impact of rising taxation upon the American working *family*.

It now takes two incomes to support a family at a standard which once required only one income just 30 years ago. In the process our national debt has exploded and we have nothing to show for it.

Like citizens of Rome, we lose democratic *and* economic freedoms through taxes.

Democracy was once the light of economic freedom — the way out of serfdom where the state took 50 percent of your earnings. Today, that economic freedom is lost with the state extracting nearly 40 percent of the income from the average American family. It was only 25 percent in the 1960s! In Rome, it was obvious. Tax laws chained you to your profession and your location, the better to find you to collect Caesar's due.

Many women today are chained to their jobs because they lost their economic freedom to stay home and raise their children during early, formative years. If we truly care about the people of this nation and our future, we must honestly look at the impact of big government and the rising demands for taxation upon our middle class.

Mothers always pay for the foolishness of governments.

War is only the most common example. In government's all consuming quest to promise more to voters — mothers, women, and the American family have come out the losers. When we enslave that segment of society, our prosperity collapses like Rome, Spain, Russia, and so many others that have gone before us.

Promise freedom. Deliver serfdom.

History warns that economic decay has always been created by the extravagance of the state and in its wake inevitably follows social decay and rising crime. Only a fool ignores the lessons of history and that is why it tends so often to repeat.

We have a rare and brief moment in time — perhaps our last window of opportunity to reflect and change the course of posterity. To ignore the warnings of history, after the social and economic decay we have witnessed in the past 30 years, is to invite the fate suffered by all previous democracies — suicide. Society will be torn apart unless the taxation demands upon the American family are not tempered and controlled. If we do not restore economic freedom to the American family, we will become a mere footnote in the annals of the 21st century.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

Princeton Economic Institute
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the weekly Standard

Between Iraq and a Hard Place

For about five days this month, thanks to Saddam Hussein, Bill Clinton and Bob Dole got into something that looked like an actual debate over foreign policy. That was nice, because unlike education and crime, where a president's influence is indirect and limited, foreign policy is a huge and unavoidable part of the president's job. It is foreign policy, after all, not new toll-free 1-800 numbers or even tax cuts, that makes the American presidency, as candidates like to say, "the most important job in the world."

But it looks like the foreign policy portion of this campaign ended almost as soon as it began—which was, as far as both candidates were concerned, plenty soon enough. President Clinton and his political advisers were so eager to get off the subject of Iraq and back "on message" that the administration actually took what looked like an easy foreign policy success and turned it into something that now looks more like a failure. This is so unassailably true that one of the senior members of Clinton's own foreign policy team, CIA director John Deutch, found himself obliged last week to contradict his president's positive assessment of the U.S. action in Iraq. Saddam, Deutch told Congress, "has gotten stronger politically in the region" in the last six weeks.

We don't share the view that the little Clinton did in Iraq was worse than nothing. Nothing would have been worse than doing nothing. But we're amazed that the president, who over the past couple of years appeared to have overcome his aversion to foreign policy, seems to have reverted to his 1993 attitude, as when he dismissed a reporter's recent question about Bosnia by saying, "What I got elected to do was to let America look at our own problems." In fact, every president is elected *above all* to look after America's role in the world. Clinton's continued lack of seriousness in this endeavor, after almost four years in office, is genuinely disturbing.

By background, temperament, and conviction, Bob Dole understands the president's primary responsibility as commander in chief. His top foreign policy advisers did want to use the recent debate over Iraq as a way to begin the broader discussion of foreign policy issues that has been missing from the campaign. And it was good to see Republicans attacking the president not for doing too much (though Phil Gramm did just that), but for doing too little to defend American interests, principles, and allies abroad. This is the correct Republican stance, rather than the constant warnings against quagmires, Vietnams, and Somalias. But the Republican challenge on foreign policy ebbed before it really even picked up steam.

That's too bad, because there were two big problems with Clinton's response to Saddam's actions in northern Iraq. First, as a response to the strategic danger posed by Saddam, firing two volleys of cruise missiles at mostly unmanned targets was inadequate. The administration's response should have been disproportionate, as defense secretary William Perry warned it was going to be before the president backed off. It should have been designed not just to warn and contain Saddam but to hurt him and undermine his control. And second, far too little weight was given by the administration to our moral responsibility to the Kurds. The United States ought not let people in a U.S.-backed U.N. safe area (even of the no-fly variety) get overrun by a brute like Saddam, especially when thousands of them had risked their lives allying themselves to us.

But there was a reason why the political mini-offensive Republicans launched against the administration's Iraq policy was destined to sputter out. GOP leaders had laid none of the theoretical groundwork for their criticisms. For instance, after years of attacking the Clinton administration for engaging in do-good interventionism in Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia, the Republicans were ill-placed to criticize Clinton for not standing behind America's commitments to the oppressed and beleaguered Kurds. Indeed, the Clinton administration, by focusing on strategic "containment" of Saddam and eschewing any involvement in the complex Kurdish problem, sounded uncannily like the Bush administration when it insisted on "containing" the Bosnian conflict and eschewed involvement in the "quagmire" of Balkan ethnic disputes.

Or consider the question of the use of force.

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Anyone who remembered Sen. John McCain's opposition to the use of U.S. air power in Bosnia, lest a single American pilot be shot down in Balkan skies, could only marvel at his open contempt for President Clinton's exclusive use of cruise missiles against Saddam. McCain has consistently *opposed* risking American lives unless what he calls "vital national security interests" are threatened. Defense of the Kurds did not pass *that* test. Clinton's timid conduct as a military leader has more in common with what Republicans have been saying for the past three and a half years than some of them would now like to admit.

Dole has an opportunity both to challenge the president's conduct and to bring his party out of its own foreign policy quagmire. Now would be a good time for Dole to give a major foreign policy speech that places Iraq in a wider context. Clinton and the Democrats *are* vulnerable on foreign policy. While our military is stretched ever thinner by assignments in the Gulf, Bosnia, and elsewhere, leading House Democrats like David Obey and George Miller talk about slashing the defense budget if they regain control of the House. While the need for American global leadership is more evident than ever, Clinton is once again vacillating and apprehensive. Democratic weakness in foreign and defense policy remains a legitimate target for Republicans.

Dole took the right and courageous stance on Bosnia, and basically the right stance on Iraq. Now he needs to explain more broadly why the United States must play an active role in these and other troubled areas of the world, why some American sacrifices are worthwhile when what are at stake are American principles and America's credibility as the world's preeminent defender of those principles. Sure, the Cold War is over. But the present relatively benign state of affairs in the world was created by American power and influence. The Republican party was the defender of American power and influence for the last couple of decades of the Cold War, much to the country's benefit and the electoral advantage of GOP candidates. The world remains dangerous; America's role remains unique; the Republican party's leadership in foreign policy remains vital. Dole has said that, if it would help, he would be willing to be Reagan. Foreign policy would be a good place to start. ♦

The GOP: Time to Panic

by Fred Barnes

Republicans are in a state of denial. House speaker Newt Gingrich mouths a mantra about Republican prospects this fall: The GOP is 90 percent certain to hold the House and Senate and 60 percent likely to pull off a hat trick by winning the White House, too. Democrats have but a 10 percent chance of capturing Congress. Rep. Bill Paxon, Gingrich's protégé and boss of the National Republican Congressional Committee, claims Republicans will gain 20 to 30 House seats. That would give them, at a minimum, a 256-178 edge over Democrats—in other words, a commanding majority like those held for decades by House Democrats. Ed Brookover, the committee's political director, says Republicans could easily reach 280 or 290 House seats in subsequent elections.

Sorry, but things aren't this rosy. The Republican hold on the House in 1996 is tenuous (the Senate looks better). While GOP officials in Washington exude optimism, Republican House incumbents and their political consultants are frightened. "For the first time, I can see Republicans losing control—and no Republicans are acknowledging it," says a prominent Republican pollster. (He insisted on anonymity for fear of retribution by Republican officials.) Democrats theoretically need to pick up only 19 seats, assuming Socialist Bernie Sanders of Vermont is reelected and votes with Democrats, as he invariably does. Of course, Democrats would probably have to win another 8 to 12 GOP seats to offset Democratic losses, chiefly in the South. But this is quite possible.

At the moment, there are ominous signs for Republicans. Democrats claim 14 GOP incumbents are behind in either public or private polls. This is extraordinarily unusual. Normally, almost all incumbents lead in polls six or seven weeks before Election Day, and if they lose, it's the result of a surge to their opponents in the final days of the campaign. That's what happened in 1994, when Republicans won the House for the first time in 40 years, and in 1982, when the GOP lost 26 seats. This time, if there's a pro-Democratic tide before November 5, even a small one, it could engulf the 14 Republicans now trailing, not to mention many others now in the lead.

Another discouraging sign for Republicans is the failure of a massive campaign effort by the business lobby to materialize. It was supposed to offset the well-financed attacks on GOP incumbents by the AFL-CIO with a $10 million effort. The business group, known

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as the Coalition, raised $1.3 million over the summer and ran TV commercials defending two endangered Republican freshmen, Greg Ganske of Iowa and George Nethercutt of Washington. Since then, the group has collected only $1.7 million more. This is a pittance compared with the $35 million organized labor has promised to spend. The excuse is that labor can assess its members for campaign funds but business groups can't. That's true, but if business groups weren't demoralized about GOP chances, they'd find a way to raise the money.

Still another disturbing note is that Republicans may not have the one advantage they'd counted on in the closing weeks of the campaign: a whopping edge in spending. Ed Brookover of the National Republican Congressional Committee says Republican House candidates should outspend Democrats by 3-to-2 after Labor Day. But Democrats, usually strapped for funds, are considering steering millions now earmarked to aid President Clinton to congressional races instead. The call will be made at the White House, and Clinton has a strong motive for wanting a Democratic Congress: Whitewater, Travelgate, and Filegate. If Democrats control Congress, investigations of the Clinton White House are likely to cease. What's more, Clinton would have a powerful ally against Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel. With the White House, Congress, and much of the press against him, Starr would have to be singularly courageous to seek indictments against White House officials, particularly Hillary Rodham Clinton. You can be sure Clinton and his aides have thought about this.

The worst-case scenario for Republicans starts with Bob Dole's continued failure to become competitive with Clinton. Then comes the first nationally televised debate—at which Clinton scores a decisive triumph over Dole. Republicans panic, while Democrats recognize their opportunity. Millions, maybe tens of millions, no longer needed by Clinton go to House and Senate Democratic challengers. Concentrated in 10 Senate and 30 or 40 House races, this infusion could have a powerful impact. Clinton himself wouldn't have to devote time to pitching for a Democratic Congress.

That's just a scenario, but it could happen. The most striking thing about 1996 congressional races is the contrast with 1994. "What's different is the absence of the negative passion toward Clinton," says pollster Whit Ayres. "That's what drove the tidal wave in 1994." Democratic strategists believe antipathy toward Gingrich may produce an anti-GOP wave, which is why Clinton and other Democratic honchos mention his name so much. But don't count on that. Neil Newhouse, whose firm is polling in more than 50 House contests, says Gingrich "isn't the negative in this election that Clinton was in 1994 and that it looked like he was going to be."

Still, there's a basic difference between 1994 and 1996 that's good news for Democrats. "In 1994, we had Democratic incumbents who were below 50 percent [in polls] and Republican challengers who were surging," says Rob Engel, political director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "Now we have Republican incumbents below 50 percent and Democratic challengers who are surging. Life is good."

The GOP's problem is partly the result of a bad decision. When Democrats and labor launched their media blitz against roughly 50 Republican incumbents last winter, the GOP did nothing. The ads demagogued the Medicare issue effectively, but Republican officials concluded their money could best be used this fall. The NRCC reluctantly aired three pro-GOP spots in late summer. But even Gingrich concedes this was too late. With no ads defending them for months, "our members felt we left them unprotected," Gingrich told *Congressional Quarterly*. GOP consultant Jeffrey Bell says Republican House members were "naked against the enemy. . . . That's not something that's easy to overcome."

Indeed, it hasn't been. Absent the labor-financed ads, Republicans might be facing a tranquil, pro-incumbent environment. Instead, says Newhouse, "the whole political environment is more polarized at the congressional level than I've ever seen it." GOP incumbents have worse poll numbers than normal; freshmen are frequently below 50 percent; Democratic challengers are better off. In some districts, 70 percent of poll respondents recall specific AFL-CIO ads, Newhouse says. So incumbents like Steve Chabot in Cincinnati finally had to counter labor attack ads by financing their own rebuttal TV spots, leaving them less money to use against their Democratic challengers now. Had labor made a similar effort in 1994, Newhouse says, Republicans might not have won the House.

If there's a wave late in the campaign, it probably won't be a pro-Republican one. So GOP candidates are hoping for the next best thing: a national mood aiding incumbents. And they may get one. A plurality of Americans believe the country is on the right track for the first time since Desert Storm in 1991. After Congress passed welfare and health-insurance reform in August, its approval rating jumped overnight (in one Midwest congressional district from 33 percent to 48 percent).

But it's not 1984 all over again, at least not yet. That's when President Reagan won a landslide reelection, while the Democrats won two Senate seats and lost a mere 14 in the House. Republicans eager to duplicate the results of 1984 have begun running

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upbeat ads touting their accomplishments. Jim Nussle of Iowa, for example, boasts of reforming Congress itself. The trick is to turn the agenda away from Democratic issues like Medicare, but House Republicans haven't managed that so far.

Worried as he is, GOP pollster Newhouse figures Republicans "will hold on by the skin of our teeth." Only maybe they won't. ♦

Robert Nisbet's Quest

by David Brooks

Robert Nisbet was ailing when Hillary Clinton uttered the most remarkable line of the presidential campaign—"it takes a president" to raise a child. Nisbet died on Sept. 9 of prostate cancer at the age of 82, ending a distinguished career as a sociologist and public intellectual. But his life's work is a refutation of Mrs. Clinton's declaration. Nisbet was a devastating critic of the politicization of everyday life, of the way family, friendship, and community have been suborned by the state. He anticipated, by nearly half a century, much of the current talk about family, neighborhood bonds, and reducing the size of government. And many of the answers he gave, starting with his 1953 book *The Quest for Community*, are more sophisticated and certainly more culturally learned than the ones we're stumbling upon today.

Nisbet was impossible to classify—an anti-individualist libertarian may be the closest label—and to read him is to expect the unexpected. For starters, the historical epochs normally taught as high points, like the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, were for him low points. And vice versa. He began his historical reflections at the Middle Ages, when, as he quotes Jacob Burckhardt, "Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation—only through some general category." Nisbet emphasized the complex array of intermediate organizations—family, guild, church—that intertwined to create a web of authority in which medieval people could lead their lives. Local attachments were strong, relations to central government weak. And that diffusion of authority allowed merchants to go through Europe without worrying about passports and permitted the creation of leagues of cities, such as the Hanseatic, Rhenish, and others.

It was in the Renaissance that the political and military began to take over and crush earlier, more local community structures, Nisbet argued. Philosophers forgot the distinction between state and society. Nisbet didn't pine for a return to the Middle Ages; he scorned nostalgia all his life. But a central problem with state power, he believed, was that it choked off new forms of community that would have allowed people to cope more comfortably with changes in technology, work, and ways of living.

"The real demon of the modern mind," Nisbet wrote in a 1953 letter to Russell Kirk, is Rousseau. It was Rousseau who regarded the community bonds Nisbet cherished as nothing more than chains shackling naturally virtuous man. Rousseau introduced a civil religion that swept away custom and mediating institutions, and had individuals making a direct contract with the state. A strong government would actually increase personal liberty, Rousseau believed, because it would sweep away reactionary religious and civil bonds. Nisbet quoted Rousseau: "Each citizen would then be completely independent of his fellow men, and absolutely dependent upon the state . . . for it is only by the force of the state that the liberty of its members can be secured." In his 1988 book *The Present Age*, Nisbet summed up Rousseau by saying that he transferred prestige and trust from the body of the church and the community to the body of the state.

Over the subsequent centuries, the state got stronger and stronger, local authorities more and more powerless. People began to look to the state to realize their personal aspirations (Communists most notably), and they increasingly felt that to be modern meant to sweep away custom and strive toward efficiency and centralization.

Quantum increases in state power, Nisbet emphasized later in his life, come during wartime: "Military, or at least war-born, relationships among individuals tend to supersede relationships of family, parish and ordinary walks of life. Ideas of chastity, modesty, decorum, respectability change during wartime." And war gives government a pretext to dominate national life. For America, he came to believe, the crucial consolidation of central state power came around World War I. Woodrow Wilson tried to use government to construct a national community and to turn foreign policy into a moral crusade. Progressives like Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann, and John Dewey argued for a stronger state apparatus, guided by politicized experts, so that government would embody, in Croly's words, a "national idea," bound together by a "religion of human brotherhood."

The result, Nisbet claimed, was instead the form of

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democratic absolutism that Tocqueville had predicted, in which government power is "absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild." Whereas once government had stopped at the church, school, fraternal organization, and club, now it felt itself justified in being everywhere, except perhaps in foreign embassies. Local institutions like mutual-aid societies were robbed of their natural function, and so withered. Even the authority of parents was weakened, as government served *in loco parentis*.

Nisbet could tease fascinating observations from this central pattern. For example, in his 1975 book *Twilight of Authority,* he noticed the emergence of "Democratic Royalism." Presidents, especially since JFK, have turned the White House into a palace (nowadays we think of the way highways are shut down when the presidential motorcade goes by). The presidential image is as closely tended as in the days of Alexander the Great and Louis XIV. Executive-branch power accrues not to cabinet colleagues but to intimates who directly serve the presidential person. For Nisbet, this inflation prevails in all societies in which the intermediate authorities have been swept away and the individual citizen relates directly to the one central figure, president or king. In richer communities, authority is dispersed and the president leads a more austere life as first among a group of diverse leaders.

Chas Fagan

In a state-dominated nation, everything becomes politicized or it withers. Nisbet wrote key sociology textbooks, but looking at the welter of policy proposals from colleagues, he acknowledged, "the social sciences [should] be termed for what they so largely are: the *political* sciences." He thought religious leaders, especially on the religious right, had dangerously politicized religion. And he thought that conservatism had been corrupted by politics and had become bogged down with pro-defense-spending militarism, conservative social-policy meddling, and economic fiddling. Looking back on the Reagan years, he wrote, "In large measure conservatism has become, within a decade or two, an ideology seeking to capture democratic absolutism rather than secure from it social and moral authority distinct from political power."

Nisbet was also out of step with contemporary conservatism because he had no taste for its celebration of the individual. He criticized the "spell of romantic individualism" that propagated the illusion of purely individual achievement. Nisbet invented the term "the Loose Individual" to describe the dominant type in a politics-dominated world: mobile, loosely connected to neighborhood, church, and spouse, driven mostly by his hunger for economic opportunity. Most of his relations revolve around his career and the cash nexus. He is even loosely tied to property, as his own wealth comes more and more in the form of mutual- fund shares, stocks, and options, rather than, say, a local factory. Without a settled place, he becomes more obsessed with status, so that, Nisbet observes, people in our egalitarian age are more covetous of a Harvard degree than they were in FDR's more class-ridden day.

The odd thing is, Nisbet's writing is not particularly gloomy in tone (especially for someone who at some points in his career thought America was on the verge of military dictatorship). He was a successful and much recognized academic, at Berkeley, Columbia, and then as a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and colleagues say he enjoyed his work immensely. He was also remarkably handsome, which must make life a little sweeter even as you contemplate the decline of civilization.

And he must have drawn pleasure from the non-political aspects of life he celebrated. He lovingly quoted Burke on how we should structure our affections: "We begin our public affections in families. No cold relation is the zealous citizen. We pass on to our neighborhoods and our provincial connections. These are our inns and resting places. Such divisions of our country as have been formed by habit and not by a sudden jerk of authority are so many little images of the great country in which the heart has found something it could fill. The love to the whole is not extinguished by this subordinate partiality."

Probably Nisbet laid it on a little too thick about the decline of American culture, but his emphasis on the subpolitical and the local was prescient and has had obvious influence on the communitarian and civil-society debates of our day. And there's something else that must be celebrated in his writing: Nisbet could scarcely go a page without bringing in some example, from Greece or Florence or India; from the third century, the fifteenth century, or the nineteenth century. Either you have a taste for this kind of ambitious field of reference or you don't, and certainly more people in the 1950s and 1960s had a taste for it than now. But if you don't press the historical comparisons too hard, it makes for unexpected and thrilling reading. ♦

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THE CLINTON DOCTRINE

By A.J. Bacevich and Lawrence F. Kaplan

Quietly, fitfully, but progressively, President Clinton has developed a distinctive doctrine governing the use of force by the United States. Neither formally promulgated nor as yet fully articulated, the Clinton Doctrine is nonetheless fast approaching something like full-fledged maturity.

The foreign policy novice who made "the economy, stupid" the centerpiece of his campaign and came to power vowing to "focus like a laser" on domestic issues approaches the end of his first term having used force with greater frequency than any other president in recent memory. If a commander in chief earned a ribbon each time he ordered U.S. forces into action, Bill Clinton would be well on his way to acquiring a chestful.

The dust-up with Iraq is the latest in a record of frenetic military activism. It follows the June 1993 missile attack on Baghdad in retribution for the Iraqi plot to assassinate former president George Bush. Later that year, the expansion of the peacemaking mission in Somalia culminated in the infamous firefight in the streets of Mogadishu. A year after that, the United States invaded and occupied Haiti to restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power. Also in 1994, the United States mounted an energetic show of force in the Persian Gulf in response to Iraqi provocations near the Kuwait border. In Bosnia, the president launched a quasi-sustained bombing campaign and subsequently dispatched 20,000 U.S. soldiers to help implement a peace agreement brokered in Dayton. A few months ago, the administration deployed two carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Straits in direct response to Chinese saber-rattling.

Throw in additional episodes like the war scare with North Korea over that country's shadowy nuclear capability, U.S. Marines' evacuating foreign nationals trapped in Liberia's seemingly endless civil war, and a grudging and belated humanitarian response to genocide in Rwanda, and the United States has experienced a flood tide of military activity.

What explains the alacrity with which the Clinton administration uses or threatens to use force? What does this surprising penchant for military engagement signify for the future?

At the simplest level, the explanation is fairly straightforward: Contemporary history has confounded the widespread, if naive, expectation that American victory in the Cold War would give way to an era of international peace and harmony. Thus, the Clinton administration has been presented with a series of challenges that it could hardly have anticipated and to which it has perforce been obliged to respond. But the notion that the White House has simply reacted to events not of its making misses the underlying significance of the new American military activism.

Opponents of Clinton's foreign policy, loath to credit the administration with coherence in any enterprise apart from campaigning for reelection, dismiss any suggestion that the administration's use of force evidences pattern or consistency—that it, in short, represents a new foreign-policy doctrine. "It is case-by-case-ism," Richard N. Haass said of the initial action in Iraq.

But such analysis is mistaken. Although the Clinton Doctrine may not be the product of principled analysis—in matters of national security the president may entertain certain proclivities or inclinations, but he can hardly be said to have evinced firm principles—it is nonetheless real. And it has supplanted the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine that moments ago epitomized American practice regarding the use of force. As a result, those who trivialize the Clinton administration's military actions do so at the cost of discounting developments likely to have serious and lasting consequences for American national security policy.

The most recent application of the Clinton Doctrine—the latest confrontation with Saddam Hussein—is also the most instructive. Whether measured in terms of purpose, means, or duration, the sporadic U.S. fusillade directed at Iraqi air defenses provides the clearest illustration of the new American thinking

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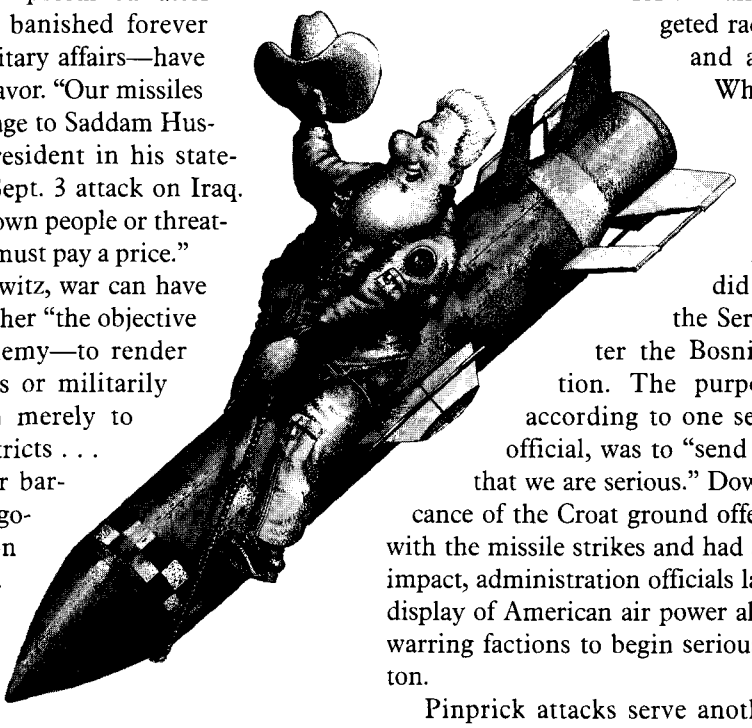
about the role the United States currently assigns its military strength.

Under the terms of the Clinton Doctrine, force is employed neither to defeat nor even to coerce. Rather, the utility of force lies in its capacity to influence, to prod an adversary to see the error of his ways, to encourage him to modify his future behavior. According to the Clinton Doctrine, military force is not merely an extension of diplomacy. Instead, force has become all but indistinguishable from diplomacy. Violence, strictly controlled and carefully limited, becomes akin to a communiqué, albeit one rendered with particular sharpness. Thus, terms like "signals" and "messages"—presumed after Vietnam to have been banished forever from the lexicon of military affairs—have once again returned to favor. "Our missiles sent the following message to Saddam Hussein," remarked the president in his statement announcing the Sept. 3 attack on Iraq. "When you abuse your own people or threaten your neighbors, you must pay a price."

According to Clausewitz, war can have one of two purposes. Either "the objective is to overthrow the enemy—to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent . . . or [it is] merely to occupy his frontier districts . . . so we can use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations." The Clinton Doctrine abjures both. This is hardly surprising: The Clinton Doctrine is not about war. Indeed, it is rooted in a determination to unshackle decision makers from war's iron logic, to devise a new methodology for employing American military power purposefully and effectively and yet with minimal risk and minimal uncertainty.



Thus, the aim of the latest American attack has been neither to overthrow nor to bargain. The actual purpose has been far more modest: to educate. Missiles would inform Saddam that his meddling about in Kurdish affairs in northern Iraq was unacceptable, letting him know, according to President Clinton, "that reckless acts have consequences."

Nor is White House thinking about the utility of force simply the product of this latest encounter with Saddam Hussein. Rather, it incorporates various lessons, positive and negative, accumulated over the course of four years in office.

The 1993 cruise missile attack on a Baghdad intelligence facility represents an early manifestation of the Clinton Doctrine of armed communication. Directed in retaliation for an alleged Iraqi assassination attempt on George Bush, the punitive attack, according to U.N. ambassador Madeleine Albright, was "a message directed at Iraq . . . a message about terrorism and the fact that we will not allow it."

Two years later President Clinton launched Tomahawk missiles into Bosnia with the intent of sending a similar signal to intransigent Bosnian Serbs. Rather than destroy the forces that had been conducting a reign of terror, the White House gave the green light for an "air offensive" that targeted radio towers, antennas, and air defense systems. While the destruction of these targets may have reduced the Bosnian Serb ability to threaten American planes, it did nothing to hamper the Serbs' ability to slaughter the Bosnian Muslim population. The purpose of the attacks, according to one senior administration official, was to "send the Serbs a message that we are serious." Downplaying the significance of the Croat ground offensive that coincided with the missile strikes and had a far more punishing impact, administration officials later asserted that this display of American air power alone had induced the warring factions to begin serious peace talks at Dayton.

Pinprick attacks serve another purpose as well. They involve little in the way of real combat. Combat, after all, implies casualties, and according to the reigning conventional wisdom, the American people have zero tolerance for battlefield losses. Nor is that all. Almost inevitably, combat involving American forces triggers the much-feared "CNN effect," with hordes of reporters converging to cover the next Big Story in spectacular, gory detail—and to shape the story to suit their own preconceived notions. Moreover, the mere prospect of serious combat is enough these days to activate latent civil-military tensions. The possibility of actual American battlefield losses sets the top brass maneuvering inside the Beltway to ensure that the political leaders, not the military commanders, take the fall.

For all these reasons, when it comes to means, the Clinton Doctrine shows a clear preference for what is

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known as a "stand-off attack." As the salvos launched against Iraq earlier this month suggest, the cruise missile has emerged as the weapon of choice, the government-sanctioned equivalent of a letter bomb. Small numbers of manned attack aircraft—if supplemented by comprehensive efforts to suppress local air defenses—are the second-best option.

These sorts of operations are very much the business of the Air Force and the Navy. So where does this leave the other branches of the armed services? As a rapid-response force for short-term emergencies—the evacuation of Americans embroiled in civil wars, for example—the Marine Corps retains some modest utility. As for the Army—especially tanks and heavy artillery—the Clinton Doctrine accords it the status of stepchild, rarely permitted to venture far from home and even then, as in Bosnia, kept on a tight leash to preclude it from causing embarrassment.

By defining force as communiqué, the Clinton Doctrine eliminates any obligation to link punishment to offense. The absence of any intent to compel the adversary to do our will or to destroy the instrument of aggression—much less to pursue anything resembling an old-fashioned "victory"—seemingly offers political decision makers and military planners a long menu of options. To deliver the message, one mailbox will serve just as well as another. Hence, in responding to the Iraqi attack on the northern city of Irbil by pummeling air defense sites scattered about the desert *south* of the Iraqi capital, the Pentagon was not behaving the least bit illogically. Indeed, in doing so, according to one unnamed senior Pentagon official cited by the *New York Times*, "We have improved our strategic position." Convenience and accessibility supplanted all other criteria.

THE LATEST STRIKE ON IRAQ SUGGESTS THE CRUISE MISSILE HAS EMERGED AS THE GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED EQUIVALENT OF A LETTER BOMB.

Yet in a more fundamental sense, the wider scope of action permitted by this modest definition of purpose is illusory. The Clinton Doctrine obliges the president and his chief associates to offer assurances that any military action mounted by the United States will endanger as few lives as possible. The idea is to hit things without jeopardizing people. The objects of sympathetic consideration are confined not simply to "friendlies," nor to bystanders, nor even to civilians. They encompass all people. Thus, in his Oval Office press conference on September 4, the president took pains to explain that the United States had designed its assault on Iraq so as "to have very limited damage to human beings."

Clinton's enthusiasm for precision-guided weapons is extremely ironic. Four years ago, the idea that smart weapons would provide the foundations for a liberal framework for the unilateral use of military power seemed absurd. After all, the Clinton national security team had entered office persuaded that the only solution to harnessing the military establishment about which they felt profoundly ambivalent lay in the embrace of "assertive multilateralism."

Neither the end of the Cold War nor victory in the Gulf had eliminated the sentiment on the left that the awesome military power of the United States was somehow tainted, marred by past American support for too many unsavory dictators and past involvement in too many suspect conflicts, above all the Vietnam War. "Assertive multilateralism" would remove that taint by guaranteeing that henceforth the United States would employ its power only in concert with and on behalf of the "world community."

In one fell swoop, the fiasco of Somalia demolished the appeal of this theory. In its wake, the White House stumbled onto a liberal paradigm for the use of force—a doctrine seemingly respectful of the tenets of enlightened liberalism, that permits aggressive military measures only against inanimate objects.

An aversion to bloodshed reflects the accumulation of past experiences rather than the response to any single incident. The Somalia debacle accounts for much, but not all, of the administration's hypersensitivity to casualties. The public outcry following that tragedy led the White House to lose control of policy and forced the president to jettison the entire Somalia mission. More than that, it obliged Clinton to endure sustained public humiliation.

Taking the lessons of Somalia to heart, the administration took to combining threats of military action with the promise of rewards for cooperation, counting on the other side to cut a deal. Its carrot-and-stick approach avoided confrontation in North Korea and facilitated the uncontested occupation of Haiti. Yet even Haiti was not so much a triumph as a bullet dodged at the last instant: Remember that the invasion was bloodless. The administration only narrowly escaped being saddled with responsibility for a messy operation for which the American public had little appetite. In the Balkans, this tactic proved ineffectual for over two years as the Bosnian Serbs repeatedly called the administration's bluff.

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The administration had no stomach for risking large-scale casualties in the Balkans. "We are really powerless to conduct air strikes," defense secretary William Perry solemnly explained in November 1994, because "the United Nations has not been asking for air strikes." The extended national saga that followed the downing and eventual rescue of *one* American pilot further muted the enthusiasm for large-scale intervention in Bosnia. Even the idea that a genocide might be underway in Europe could not stir the United States.

The administration finally solved its Bosnian dilemma by drawing on its experience during the 1993 Baghdad missile strike. Although it had only destroyed part of one building along with janitorial staff, the administration declared it "a devastating blow to Iraq's ability to plan and carry out [terrorist] operations in the future," in the words of Vice President Al Gore. If blowing holes in one building counted as a "devastating blow," it was also cheap, an after-hours missile attack that not only precluded American casualties, but, as Warren Christopher hastened to point out, also "minimize[d] the loss of [Iraqi] life."

FOR THE WOULD-BE WAR MANAGERS IN THE CLINTON WHITE HOUSE, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS CLAIMING VICTORY TOO SOON.

This experience provided the template for what became Operation Deliberate Force, the U.S.-led air campaign in Bosnia initiated in the summer of 1995. Deliberate Force was Baghdad '93 writ large. Launching precision missile strikes from a suitably safe remove, using manned aircraft with precision-guided munitions to destroy fixed installations such as bridges and command posts—while taking care to minimize casualties on the ground—the administration enjoyed what it saw as its greatest military triumph. "Peace" came to Bosnia.

Somalia taught the administration many lessons. Chief among them was this one: To dawdle is to invite disaster.

In May 1993, U.S. operations in Somalia appeared to be on track. Consistent with the original plan of the Bush administration, the United States had transferred formal control of the Somalia operation to the United Nations. Days later, in a handsomely conceived photo-op, President Clinton strode across the South Lawn accompanied by a cadre of U.S. Marines just returned from their mission of mercy. During the ensuing ceremonies, the president proudly declared Operation Restore Hope a resounding success. In a subsequent White House press release, he announced that the U.S. mission to Somalia was "over."

In fact, that mission was far from over and catastrophe rather than success loomed. Within a month, U.N. ambassador Madeleine Albright had secured passage of a Security Council resolution calling for the capture of the Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid. The train of events leading to the pointless loss of 18 American lives had been set in motion.

Thus, the Clinton Doctrine's third salient characteristic: When it comes to using American military forces, define success in the narrowest conceivable terms; declare your objectives achieved as soon as possible; and disengage before events have a chance to turn sour. For the would-be war managers in the White House, there is no such thing as claiming victory too soon.

This, too, has been evident in the administration's packaging of the most recent U.S. military actions in Iraq. Hardly had the cruise missiles struck their targets than the administration began making the case that the action was a huge success. "Our mission has been achieved," Clinton declared within 24 hours of the first missile strike, citing reports that "there has been a withdrawal of the forces, a dispersal of the forces" to bolster his claim. Nor have the ensuing strategic upheaval in northern Iraq and the near collapse of the allied coalition persuaded the president to budge from that claim.

A comparable disconnect between claims and reality has characterized almost every military venture the administration has undertaken. After the 1993 missile strike on a Baghdad intelligence facility, Clinton was quick to assert that the attack "did in fact cripple the Iraqi intelligence capacity." Although Clinton's aides later conceded that the attack had affected Iraq's intelligence gathering networks only minimally, the administration stood firm in its insistence that the operation had been a success.

Such self-congratulatory bravado—a theme repeated following the showdown with North Korea and the occupation of Haiti—has been most pronounced in the case of Bosnia. Prior to last year's deployment of ground forces to enforce the Dayton agreement, administration policy adhered to a recurring pattern. Following some Bosnian Serb outrage, American aircraft would plink a tank or two; the administration would declare the action a testimonial to American resolve; and after pausing briefly the Bosnian Serbs would resume their depredations. The present situa-

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tion in Bosnia represents little more than a variant of this pattern. By signing on to an arbitrary one-year deadline for withdrawing American ground forces, the administration has all but ensured that Bosnia will plunge back into war once the peacekeepers depart. No doubt, come December, the president will declare the Bosnia expedition complete, the mission itself a huge success. What happens after the United States and its allies leave is beside the point; by then, the troops will be safely home.

How, finally, are we to evaluate the Clinton Doctrine? Its defects are numerous and irreparable. To begin with, the efficacy of the doctrine as thus far implemented is highly dubious. To contend that military actions conceived and undertaken by this administration have "restored" hope to Somalia, "restored" democracy to Haiti, preserved the integrity of Bosnia, or deterred Saddam Hussein is plainly inconsistent with the facts. Whether administration initiatives have terminated the North Korean nuclear program and had any lasting effect in curbing Chinese military adventurism is likewise at least open to dispute.

Beyond that, the Clinton Doctrine fails on three counts. It perpetuates our strategic bankruptcy. It threatens to ensnarl the United States in troubling moral complications to which it will provide no adequate response. And it is recklessly ahistorical.

The proclaimed effectiveness of military operations conceived under the auspices of the Clinton Doctrine is contrived and largely fanciful. The whole business reflects the administration's insistence on substituting tactical scoring for genuine strategic measures of effectiveness. The essence of the Clinton Doctrine is to offer action in lieu of purpose. According to the administration's scorecard, it is not the integrity of the coalition formed to contain Iraq nor the safety of the coalition-established Kurdish enclaves that matters, but the percentage of hits achieved by U.S. munitions flung at Iraqi air defense sites. Thus does the Clinton Doctrine invite Americans to indulge in the conceit that the United States needs no grand strategy, that military prowess obviates the need for long-range thinking about purposes and policies. Writing as early as 1993, Thomas Friedman observed, "Whether in Iraq, Somalia, or Bosnia, America's military commitments are increasingly being defined by the risk free weapons available, not just strategic goals." The statement remains disturbingly accurate—without the word "just."

Ultimately, however, this preoccupation with tactical effects undermines U.S. credibility. Indications that the United States restricts itself to what Charles Krauthammer has aptly characterized as "metal-on-metal" attacks undercut the effectiveness of the "message." The tit-for-tat use of force encourages adversaries like Saddam to conclude that they enjoy more room to maneuver than American rhetoric would suggest—as indeed under the Clinton Doctrine they do.

The Clinton Doctrine is also flawed in that it provides no morally persuasive basis for taking life. For the practice of statecraft throughout the West, this is an increasingly problematic issue, nowhere more so than among Clinton's constituents on the left. Even in conflicts viewed as broadly legitimate, questions of who may be killed and how many killed in the pursuit of a particular aim have become increasingly controversial—recall, for example, the sensitivities aroused by images of the so-called Highway of Death in the waning hours of the Persian Gulf War.

Perhaps such sensitivity reflects genuinely heightened moral awareness. Perhaps it is simply an effort to disprove the contention that *raison d'état* and the demands of humanity are inherently at odds with one another.

For now, this much at least is evident: By advancing the fiction that its military initiatives are distinct from war per se, the Clinton Doctrine in some measure forfeits the state's traditional claim that it possesses authority to kill. Once the justification for force derives from some basis other than the prerogative of one sovereign state to wage war against another, principles such as proportionality and discrimination lose their permissiveness. To put it another way: Given the precision weapons that the United States advertises as central to the new American military doctrine, how many people is it permissible to kill merely to send a message?

Finally, there is the issue of presumptuousness. Since the Gulf War, American defense professionals have entertained themselves with tantalizing visions of an emerging military revolution that will "change the very nature of warfare." Among its most fervent advocates, this prospective revolution has fed an obsession with technology as the defining element in modern warfare.

The Clinton Doctrine treats that revolution as fact and as the exclusive property of the United States. From that revolution, the Clinton administration has extracted a single maxim: the certainty that the United States has been endowed with a unique ability to use force in a precisely calibrated and antiseptic fashion. But this belief that Americans and only Americans have uncovered the secret of using violence without releasing the dogs of war is the deadliest illusion of all.

Ultimately, a doctrine that relies on antiseptic

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methods of warfare may prove dangerously seductive. Seemingly tailor-made for an era of post-modern politics, precision weapons also have the potential to increase the propensity of political leaders to resort to violent means. The ready availability of such weapons may tempt them to conclude that force need no longer remain the option of last resort, and induce them to employ their arsenal casually and without due reflection.

The defects of the Clinton Doctrine—its lack of strategic underpinnings, its tenuous moral legitimacy, and its disdain for historical experience—bear a striking resemblance to an earlier and discredited approach to the use of force. In its essentials, the Clinton Doctrine resurrects theories tested and found wanting three decades ago.

The insistence on using force as a medium for negotiating between elites; the resort to military action as a surrogate for strategic coherence; the inflated expectations of success to be gained from "surgical" strikes; the self-defeating preoccupation with casualties; and the *faux* moral posturing of those who profess shock at the discovery of blood on their hands: We have seen these before. They were hallmarks of the disastrous policies devised during the era when Robert McNamara presided as chief architect of American military policy. The anger of their youth having dissipated, their idealism now supplanted by hubris and ambition, the passionate children of the 1960s have after all grown up to be not unlike their fathers. ♦

Why, and How, Tax Cuts Really Do Work

By William Tucker

Forget Iran, forget tobacco, forget abortion. The presidential election is being fought over the idea of a 15 percent across-the-board tax cut. President Clinton has been portraying Bob Dole's tax-cut proposal as pie-in-the-sky, bet-the-farm politics, and for now, the electorate seems to have accepted this diagnosis. Polls show that a majority believes Dole's proposal is "just a political ploy" (although even here it is obvious the pollsters are loading the question).

But is there anything speculative about the effects of cutting taxes? Hardly. In the last six years, half a dozen states have carried out ruthlessly aggressive tax-cutting programs, mostly under Republican governors. The results have been nothing short of spectacular. In every state the outcome is routinely described as a "miracle."

In fact, lowering tax rates does not lower revenues. When a governor claims to have "saved taxpayers $1 billion," he or she is applying the lowered rate to the old, sluggish economy. In reality, job creation takes off, broadening the tax base. Everyone is soon stunned to realize that, even though rates are lower, revenues still grow. This creates budget surpluses, which embolden governors and legislatures to slash tax rates even further, compounding growth once again. Deficits disappear, credit-rating agencies voice enthusiasm, surpluses pile up.

Nor is there carnage among the elderly or armies of children thrown into the streets. Medicaid spending—an area where states still have a great deal of latitude—has been brought under control without harming anyone. Spared from shrill accusations of wanting to see the elderly die, governors and legislatures have found they can actually improve service while keeping spending within bounds.

The governors have several important tools at their disposal to achieve this. Most states operate under the constitutional requirement of a balanced budget. Most governors also have a line-item veto, and many state governments are now regulated by a remarkable series of citizens' initiatives against taxes and spending. The overall result has been exactly what is intended—a shrinking public sector and corollary growth of the

William Tucker's cover story on George Pataki appeared in our Sept. 16 issue.

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private sector. Here's how things have gone in several states.

The Michigan Story

In 1990, Michigan, like many other states, was in an economic crisis. Caught between a national recession and a slumping auto industry, the government was running a $1.8 billion deficit. Since the collapse of the Rust Belt in the 1980s, the state had lost population. Manufacturing jobs cuts were projected as far as the eye could see. The state was rapidly turning into a welfare mecca. One in seven people in Detroit was on AFDC. The population of Detroit—once the fourth largest city in America—slipped below 1 million for the first time since the 1920s. Medicaid spending was increasing on an average of 20 percent every year. The state that once symbolized industrial America was in free fall.

In 1990, John Engler, the majority leader of the state senate, was elected governor on a program of reducing taxes. He defeated two-term incumbent governor Jim Blanchard, who ran on a program of raising taxes. Engler was no simple business-oriented conservative. A student of Russell Kirk and Ludwig von Mises, he had very clear ideas about reducing the scope of taxation and government. "Across the state, slanted newspaper, magazine, and television editorials accused Michigan Republicans of trying to help the rich at the expense of the poor and middle class," he recalls. "They failed to mention that one of their patron saints, President John F. Kennedy, supported tax cuts because, he said, 'a rising tide lifts all boats.'"

Engler began with an immediate reduction of the income-tax rate. Since it was anticipated that the supply-side effect of tax cuts would take two years to kick in, he began cutting spending as well. Using his line-item veto (a tool possessed by 36 of the nation's 50 governors), plus executive orders, Engler trimmed $2 billion out of the 1992 budget, closing the deficit. His biggest move was to eliminate General Assistance, a form of welfare made available to able-bodied adults that cost the state $225 million a year. (General Assistance, or "Home Relief," was the one state welfare program that was not transferred to federal funding by the 1936 Social Security Act. It is now continued in only 15 states.)

In addition to reducing income-tax rates, Engler made it clear that the state's entire attitude toward business would be changing. He began phasing out Michigan's intangibles tax, the equivalent of a capital-gains tax. He also eliminated the inheritance tax, which fell heavily on family farms and small businesses. He set up the Office of Regulatory Reform and eliminated over 2,000 obsolete and burdensome regulations. He reformed medical liability and straightened out environmental regulations that were discouraging the redevelopment of urban industrial sites.

Almost immediately, the Michigan economy responded. A state that had been almost entirely dependent upon the auto industry for 75 years began to diversify. New investment went into small, high-tech firms specializing in software and engineering services. Of the 20 counties around the country with the highest concentration of Internet host computers, two are now in Michigan. Unemployment, which had been above the national average since 1978, fell below the national average in January 1994. Since 1991, employment has climbed by 500,000, and in 1995, one out of every five new manufacturing jobs in America was created in Michigan. Personal income has also climbed 25.9 percent, the fastest growth in the nation. "We're not just adding jobs," says Engler, "we're adding good jobs."

Rather than using tax cuts simply as a one-time "stimulus," Engler has directed an overall plan toward downsizing government on a broad front. He has cut taxes 21 times, for theoretical tax reductions totaling $3.6 billion since 1991. When Democrats in the legislature abolished the property tax for school funding, Engler took up the challenge and transferred funding to a smaller sales tax. The state's rainy-day fund, depleted to under $200 million in 1990, is back over $1 billion. Yet under the Headlee Amendment, a ballot-initiative tax reform adopted in 1978, the state is not allowed to retain further surpluses. In 1995, Michigan returned $113 million to taxpayers in the form of a 2 percent deduction on their income taxes.

Michigan now sees its major problem as finding enough workers to fill jobs in its booming economy. "The auto industry projects they will need 100,000 new workers over the next few years to meet their job growth," says John Truscott, spokesman for the governor's office. "Right now we don't know how we're going to meet that demand. There will probably be a lot of new in-migration." Engler is improving the state's education program with the nation's most ambitious charter-school program—40 new schools in the last three years. Next year he will introduce "renaissance zones," an extension of enterprise zones, in which both people and businesses who move into dilapidated neighborhoods will pay no state or local taxes for fifteen years.

In short, anything and everything that has been devised to reduce government and throw responsibility back onto the private sector and private individuals

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is being tried in Michigan—with spectacular results. "Ever since the Reagan Revolution, liberal journalists, economists, and politicians have tried to convince Americans that tax cuts are 'wacky' and doomed to failure," Engler says. "But in Michigan we have tried them and we know this: Tax cuts not only work, they work wonders."

In 1994, Engler was reelected with 62 percent of the vote, the highest margin of any Republican governor in the state's history.

The Real Massachusetts Miracle

Massachusetts was in a situation similar to Michigan's back in 1990. The state was reeling from the consequences of a bogus miracle, engineered by 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. In attempting to turn Massachusetts into a model welfare state, Dukakis had nearly spent his state into bankruptcy. Even as he ran for president, the governor was rifling pension funds and presiding over a ballooning deficit. A state health plan, meant to be a model for a national effort, collapsed in disarray. The national press kept a tight lid on this story and it actually played little role in Dukakis's electoral defeat. After the election, however, state residents were left living in what the *Boston Globe* described as a "fiscal Beirut." For starters, Dukakis imposed a $1 billion emergency tax increase to try to stem the damage.

Kevin Chadwick

In 1990, William Weld, a former U.S. attorney for Massachusetts, was elected governor on the platform "Tough on Taxes, Tough on Crime." "At the time, our deficit was the equivalent of a $200 billion deficit at the federal level—about what we're facing now in Washington," says Weld.

Weld immediately cut tax rates across the board, accompanied by government downsizing. In his first two years, state spending declined, even without accounting for inflation, despite Democratic control of both houses of the state legislature. As economic activity surged and tax receipts ran ahead of predictions, tax rates were cut once again—a strategy that has been pursued by every tax-cutting governor.

From 1991 to 1996, the marginal rate on the median income was reduced from 6.25 percent to 5.95 percent. Capital-gains and real-estate taxes have also been slashed. Altogether, Weld has cut taxes rates 15 times, for theoretical savings to taxpayers of $1 billion. Yet because of the supply-side effect, tax revenues have actually moved ahead at 5 percent per year. When 1996 tax collections ran $200 million ahead of projections, Weld announced the surplus would be refunded to taxpayers through a temporary increase in the personal exemption. At the same time, the governor has made sure that spending responsibilities were not simply mandated to lower levels of government.

"We've transferred Medicaid to a managed-care format that has saved the state an enormous amount of money," says Weld. "Yet service is actually better. We think there's a lot of things we could teach the federal government on this score."

Massachusetts has experienced an enormous economic resurgence. Unemployment fell from 9.6 percent in July 1991, to 4.5 percent in July 1996. Total personal income increased from $136 billion to $171 billion over the same period, growing at 6 percent in each of the last two years. Over 200,000 new jobs have been created in the process.

"In four years we've gone from a $2 billion deficit to a $320 million surplus," says Weld, who is now running for the U.S. Senate seat held by John Kerry. "We didn't get from there to here with penny-ante, targeted tax cuts."

Whitman's Sampler, and Playing the Fife

New Jersey's Christie Whitman has had an equally dramatic success. Running in 1993 against the Democratic incumbent, James Florio, who had imposed the largest tax increase in the state's history, Whitman promised to reduce income taxes 30 percent in her first three years of office.

After coming from 30 points behind to win, Whitman fulfilled her promise in two years. Tax rates were

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cut 30 percent on incomes under $40,000 and slightly less in the higher brackets. Yet despite the reduction in tax rates, total receipts have risen in all three subsequent years. Whereas over 500,000 jobs had left New Jersey under Florio's administration, 140,000 new jobs have been created since Whitman took office, outpacing growth in neighboring northeastern states.

New Jersey is unique in that 90 percent of the state's income-tax revenues are passed through the local communities to pay for schools. Yet the reduction in the growth of state revenues has not forced municipalities into undue increases in property taxes. A study by Timothy Goodspeed and Peter Salins found that New Jersey residents were paying only 22 cents in increased property taxes for every dollar saved in state income taxes. In an additional effort to minimize property taxes, Whitman persuaded the legislature to adopt a constitutional amendment forbidding the state to impose unfunded mandates on local communities.

"Our tax cuts are returning money back to our citizens' pockets," says Whitman. "It doesn't belong to the government, it belongs to taxpayers.

Arizona is another state riding on a wave of expansion spurred by tax reduction. Already fiscally conservative, Arizona is the only state that refused to set up a Medicaid program when the federal enabling legislation was adopted in 1968. Instead, it established "ACCESS" (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System) in 1982, which operates entirely on managed care and has proved far more efficient. Arizona's Medicaid expenses are only $390 per recipient, as opposed to a national average of $3,080, even though it has a large and politically active elderly population.

Elected in 1991, Fife Symington has run a tax-cutting regime in which he has eliminated $1.5 billion in theoretical revenues, mostly from chopping personal and business taxes. The Republican governor also supported a state ballot initiative that requires a supermajority of two-thirds of the legislature to adopt tax increases. His stated purpose is to eliminate the income tax altogether—although that goal is cloudy now, as Symington has become entangled in ethical problems.

The marginal rate on the median income is now 4.2 percent, down from 5.25 percent. (California's rate, by contrast, is 8 percent and New Mexico's 7.1 percent.) Nonetheless, tax revenues have been consistently higher than expectations and the state ended fiscal 1996 with a $750 million surplus. Arizona has ranked among the top five states in job growth for the past four years and in 1995 was first in the nation. During Symington's tenure, jobs, business creation, and population have grown at three times the national average.

What Happens When Taxes Are Raised

But perhaps these states are simply riding the wave of a national economic recovery that has reduced levels of unemployment. Are there any counterexamples that show a negative impact from raising taxes? There certainly are.

California is the prime case. When Republican governor Pete Wilson took office in 1991, he and the Democratic state legislature faced a mind-boggling $14 billion two-year deficit that was being rolled over through short-term loans, making a mockery of the constitutional requirement for a balanced budget. Wilson, acting more like a liberal Democrat, persuaded the legislature to overcome a two-thirds-majority requirement and raise taxes. In 1991, he signed an agreement for a historic $8.3 billion increase, or $1,081 annually for the average family of four.

Figuring the new revenues would close the gap, the state didn't bother to curtail spending. Instead, the budget increased 10 percent. Yet the anticipated revenues never materialized. An inverse supply-side effect took hold. Economic activity declined and the tax increase fell $5.9 billion short. The state continued to borrow, doubling its debt and losing its AAA credit rating in the process. The national recession, which officially ended in 1991 nationwide, stretched out into 1993 in California. The deteriorating business climate, along with the Los Angeles riots, drove people from the state. For the first time since 1849, California began losing population—over a million people from 1990 to 1995.

Only when Wilson reversed course and rescinded most of the tax increases of 1991 did the state's economy begin to revive. In 1995, the legislature—still controlled by Democrats—did what might seem impossible and lowered tax rates exclusively for people in the upper brackets. Out-migration is slowing and California has finally started to grow again. Completely chastened by the 1991 experience, Wilson has now proposed an across-the-board income-tax reduction for all California residents of—you guessed it—15 percent.

West Virginia is a state that has suffered a prolonged, seemingly endless recession, because of higher taxes. Ruled by Democrats since the Civil War, the state's main source of enterprise in recent decades has been federal projects brought in by former Senate majority leader Robert Byrd. The gospel of reducing taxes and downsizing government is almost unknown. Under Democratic governor Gaston Caperton, elected in 1988, state spending has increased 60 percent, or $3,000 per year for a family of four. Caperton extended the state's 6 percent sales tax to include food (a $400

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million revenue increase) and raised the state's gas tax by 10 cents per gallon. The state's 9 percent corporate income tax is among the nation's highest. Despite a constant stream of federal largess, the state's unemployment rate is chronically at recession levels.

Rhode Island is another state whose one-party Democratic rule has put it into a seemingly endless recession. Under Democratic governor Bruce Sundlun, state spending grew almost 10 percent a year from 1990 to 1994. The state has a 7.7 percent marginal tax rate on the median income, a 7 percent state sales tax (highest in the nation), and a 9 percent corporate income tax (second highest in the nation). The Small Business Survival Committee ranks the state dead last in its index of business climates. "Rhode Island is an incestuous, one-party mix of Democratic legislators and powerful public-sector labor unions," says Stephen Moore, director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute and author of its annual "Fiscal Report Card on America's Governors."

Even newly elected Republican governor Lincoln Almond has been unable to stem the tide. This year he became the first Rhode Island governor in history to veto a state budget when he turned down a $1.7 billion outlay for "a government we can't afford." He was promptly overridden by a legislature in which Democrats hold a 5-to-1 majority. The state has lost 6.5 percent of its jobs in the past five years and has suffered the largest percentage population loss of any of the 50 states.

IF WE HAD A EUROPEAN-STYLE LABOR FORCE, STATES SUCH AS NEW YORK AND RHODE ISLAND MIGHT EASILY HAVE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF 20 PERCENT.

The figures on population growth and loss are worth noting because economists are coming to recognize them as a key indicator of a state's economic health. In an era of environmental dogma, when local communities often regard growth as a negative and population loss as a virtual blessing, the migration of American workers from state to state, community to community, has passed almost unnoticed as an increasingly accurate barometer of business climates.

Richard Vedder, who has studied such population movements from the past 15 years, finds that migration has almost inevitably been from high-tax states to low-tax states. "If you look at the eight states that taxed personal income at more than 3 percent in 1993, you find a net out-migration of 789,000 from 1990 to 1994," says Vedder. "When you look at the nine states that tax at zero to 1 percent, you find an in-migration of 1,396,000—exclusive of foreign immigration. In effect, this means that about 500 people a day leave the eight high-tax states and 1,000 people a day arrive in the nine low-tax."

Vedder at first attributed this to a desire of individuals to pay lower taxes and keep more of their salaries. But he now recognizes that job creation may be a more important factor. "People don't often move across the country just to pay lower taxes, but they will move across the country to find a job," says Vedder. "Low-tax states are continuously creating more jobs while high-tax states are constantly losing them."

Lawrence Katz of Harvard and Olivier Blanchard of MIT have reached the same conclusion. In a 1992 study for the Brookings Institution, they found that unemployment in individual states has rarely exceeded the national average for long. Instead, people are constantly migrating out of low-employment states into states where jobs are available. "We have a very mobile work force—much more mobile than in Europe," says Katz. "When people migrate, it's often in search of jobs."

This is why unemployment rates between a high-tax state like New York and a low-tax state like Texas rarely differ by more than a few percentage points. If we had a European-style labor force, where workers did not move readily from region to region, states such as New York and Rhode Island might easily have unemployment rates of 20 percent, while Texas, Michigan, and Arizona would be importing "guest" workers. "Our labor markets tend to clear," says Vedder. "It's one of the reasons we have a dynamic economy. But it also tends to mask the tremendous difference between state economic policies."

Nor are these patterns irreversible. The Michigan experience has shown that a population-losing, high-tax state can quickly reverse job and population losses if it cuts taxes and reduces government spending.

Taxes: What the Voters Say

All these changes have not come in a vacuum. Driving them has been the populist movement for reduction in government that began with California's Proposition 13 and has since become much more refined and sophisticated.

Take Michigan's Headlee Amendment. Adopted in 1978, the year of Prop. 13, it was much more carefully

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conceived. Prop. 13 simply put limits on local property taxes, which made it immediately popular with voters. But it did nothing to limit state spending.

Conceived by Richard Headlee, a Farmington Hills insurance executive, and written in part by Milton Friedman, the Headlee amendment limited state spending—but also prevented the state from mandating spending by local governments. "We closed all the exits," says Headlee. If tax collections exceed expectations, the surplus must be returned to taxpayers—the reason for the 2 percent rebate in 1995.

Yet the amendment lay dormant for more than a decade, ignored by Michigan officials whose only reaction to the amendment was to oppose taxpayer groups that tried to have it enforced. The Michigan Manual—the state's official guide—didn't even list it as part of the state constitution for more than a decade. Only when Engler took office did he turn Headlee into the powerful budget-controlling tool it has become.

Ballot initiatives have now passed through an entire second generation, in which the restrictions on taxing and spending have been much more carefully drawn:

¶Colorado's Amendment 1 limits state spending by a formula tied to inflation and population growth. Any tax or fee increase requires voter approval.

¶Washington's Initiative 601 limits the growth in state spending to inflation and population growth. Any tax increase that puts spending over the limit requires voter approval.

¶Arizona's Proposition 108, adopted by a 72 percent majority, requires a two-thirds majority in both houses of the state legislature to pass any new measure that will increase taxes or general revenues.

¶Oklahoma's State Question 640, adopted in 1992, requires that any legislation introduced to raise taxes pass by three-fourths majorities of both houses or by voter referendum.

How Washington Can Do It

So why can't any of this be applied at the federal level? The obvious answer is that it can. The Democratic response to Dole's proposed 15 percent across-the-board tax cut is that it will "blow a hole in the deficit." (And let us not fail to appreciate, for the moment, this new Democratic conversion to fiscal responsibility.) Yet every Republican governor who has jump-started his state's economy has been in the same deficit position. What defined their success was the perception that tax reduction, combined with aggressive spending cuts, was the way to overcome these deficits.

What has been missing at the federal level to this point are the tools to handle the budget. That is no longer a problem. The president who takes office in 1997 will be the first chief executive in history with a line-item veto. He can also have a balanced-budget amendment anytime he wants it. That would complete the repertoire that has given the governors such enormous control over their state finances.

All that will be required, of course, is the will—and here the candidates differ. Bob Dole, although a late convert, has obviously grasped the significance of these developments. "Anybody who thinks we can't use the line-item veto to deliver these tax cuts with a balanced budget doesn't know Jack Kemp and Bob Dole," he has said.

CLINTON WANTS "TARGETED" TAX CUTS, WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH GIVING POWER BACK TO THE PEOPLE AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH MICROMANAGING FROM WASHINGTON.

Bill Clinton, on the other hand, is still stumbling around in the dark. His acceptance speech actually cited three budget-making reforms—the line-item veto, the ban on unfunded mandates, and the application of federal laws to Congress—as major accomplishments of his administration. (These are, of course, three of the ten planks of the Contract with America.) On tax cuts, however, the president is still playing the old game of manipulating the economy through "incentives." Clinton only wants "targeted" tax cuts, which have nothing to do with giving power back to the people and everything to do with micromanaging from Washington. "Every tax cut I call for tonight is targeted," he said. They "are fully paid for in my balanced budget plan, line by line, dime by dime . . . and they focus on education."

And that's precisely the point. First and foremost, Clinton's tax cuts are the latest version of Stanley Greenberg's holy grail (or "killer app" in modern terminology), that elusive middle-class entitlement that will forever bind the average working-age American to the government the same way the elderly and the poor have already been taken into the fold.

Second, they are designed almost exclusively to steer people into education—which just happens to be the home of the teachers' unions, public-sector unions, and professorial bargaining associations that are the

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backbone of the Democratic party. Every penny saved to a taxpayer would have to be spent in some institution of learning.

But what if someone wants to quit school to start a business—as Bill Gates, Steven Jobs, Marc Andreessen, and so many other entrepreneurs of the information age have done? Or what if they just want to start a landscaping business or a bowling alley or a laundromat—or marry their pregnant girlfriend and start bringing home a paycheck? Once again, the overall economic climate of high taxes and low job creation will make it difficult. Without job creation, "targeted" tax cuts are likely to produce little more than a European-style population of perpetual graduate students—or a souped-up version of the "job-training" treadmill that has engulfed so many welfare recipients.

The general upwelling of populist revolt against runaway government spending and taxation has now washed up on Washington's doorstep. Whether these attitudes finally penetrate Congress and the White House is what this election is really about. ♦

A Disgraceful Newspaper Exposé and Its Fans

By Tucker Carlson

"We've been saying this for years," Rep. Maxine Waters told a crowd of supporters in Los Angeles not long ago, "and now we've got *this!*" In her hand, Waters held a series of articles published by the San Jose *Mercury News* that seemed to confirm what the congresswoman from South-Central Los Angeles had been claiming all along: that America's inner-city crack epidemic was manufactured from above, part of an (until now) secret plot to destroy black people. Two days later, at a gathering sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington, Waters made her point explicit. As hundreds of people cheered, she thanked those present "for having the audacity to be outraged . . . that the government put drugs in our communities."

The series, entitled "Dark Alliance: The story behind the crack explosion" and written by a reporter named Gary Webb, was published in August. It purports to show how in the 1980s CIA-supported drug dealers flooded poor sections of Los Angeles with inexpensive cocaine, thereby turning the city into the "crack capital of the world." Such tales have been a staple of the black press for the better part of a decade, but with the publication of the *Mercury News* series, they went mainstream. Within weeks, both CIA director John Deutch and attorney general Janet Reno pledged to look into the matter. Barry McCaffrey, the Clinton administration's drug czar, called for a "full and thorough investigation." Last week, Newt Gingrich conferred with Maxine Waters. Cries of outrage are ringing out at the highest levels across the land. Before they grow much louder, all involved might take another look at the series that started the outcry. It's a disgrace.

Gary Webb's stories revolve around the activities of two Nicaraguan exiles living in the United States, Oscar Danilo Blandon and Juan Norwin Meneses. According to Webb, both men were members of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, a contra group known as the FDN. Both also were active in the drug trade. Meneses was Blandon's supplier. Blandon, in turn, sold thousands of pounds of cocaine to a black dealer from South-Central Los Angeles named Ricky "Freeway Rick" Ross. Profits from the transactions may have gone to finance the FDN's war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Ultimately, both Blandon and Meneses admitted to their roles as cocaine traffickers; Blandon went on to become an informant for the Drug Enforcement Administration.

These are the essential, uncontested facts in the series, all of which are news only to those with short memories. In 1986, the Reagan administration itself stated that some contras—or at least individuals on the periphery of the Nicaraguan resistance—had been involved in drug trafficking. The head of the CIA's Central American Task Force, in public testimony before Congress in 1987, said the same thing. The fact that people associated with the contras (as well as, for that matter, officials in the Sandinista government) ran drugs has been a matter of consensus

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in the United States for more than a decade.

Whether the CIA tacitly condoned or participated in the drug trafficking is another matter. A subcommittee headed by Sen. John Kerry spent two years and huge amounts of money in the mid-1980s trying to answer the question. So did some of the best investigative reporters in America. All had strong motives, both ideological and professional, to prove the CIA had a hand in cocaine smuggling. None was able to. Indeed, ample evidence surfaced that CIA officials had worked to remove drug traffickers from the Nicaraguan resistance.

Webb appears to solve the long-standing mystery, making a case that the CIA was indeed involved in bringing cocaine into Los Angeles. (The *Mercury News* is hardly subtle about the point: Accompanying the series is an illustration of a man smoking crack. The image is superimposed on the official seal of the CIA.) The only problem is, after a year of research, Webb came up with no evidence to support his claim.

Webb's series does show that during the time they were dealing drugs, Blandon and Meneses met with Adolfo Calero and Enrique Bermudez, two well-known contra leaders who had received money from the CIA. But that, essentially, is it. Webb provides no evidence that the CIA knew about the meetings. He presents no proof that drug trafficking was ever discussed during them. (Bermudez, assassinated five years ago in Managua, is no longer present to tell his side of the story.) Moreover, Webb offers no quotes from CIA employees, on or off the record, no government cables or memos or written instructions that show the agency had any knowledge of what Blandon and Meneses were doing.

Webb fails to explain exactly how—or how much—money from the drug sales made it back to contra forces in Honduras and Costa Rica. Even Danilo Blandon, the admitted drug dealer and the person on whom the entire series hangs, is not explicit about a CIA connection. The best Webb can come up with is a quote from Blandon claiming he sold drugs on "orders from other people." Blandon's lawyer seems sure his client worked with the knowledge of the CIA, but the only evidence he provides comes from his own gut—from feelings about the "atmosphere of CIA and clandestine activities."

Instead of actual evidence, Webb relies on a series of probably unrelated events to show a conspiracy was afoot. Both Meneses and Blandon seem to have engaged in drug trafficking in the United States for a number of years before being brought to trial. In 1986, for instance, federal agents raided Blandon's properties looking for evidence of his involvement with drugs. They didn't find any. It may have been a stock case of bureaucratic incompetence—dope dealers escape prosecution or skate out on technicalities every day—but Webb doesn't see it that way. Rather, he claims Blandon was saved by the intervention of unseen hands. "The cops always believed that investigation had been compromised by the CIA," he quotes a local public defender as saying. Webb swallows the claim whole, never acknowledging that bumbling cops might have had a motive to blame their failures on a mysterious federal agency.

His essential point unproved, Webb goes on to make what may be the most inflammatory charge in the series, that Blandon and Meneses "opened the first pipeline between Colombia's cocaine cartels and the black neighborhoods of Los Angeles," and so "helped spark a crack explosion in urban America." It is a jarring thesis, one that places blame for the presence of crack and its attendant evils in the inner city squarely on a government conspiracy. Webb proves none of it.

Indeed, in parts of "Dark Alliance," Webb contradicts his own assertions. "Thousands of young black men are serving long prison sentences for selling cocaine—a drug that was virtually unobtainable in black neighborhoods before members of the CIA's army brought it into South-Central in the 1980s at bargain-basement prices," Webb writes in the first installment. By the second installment, however, Webb has changed his mind. "Other L.A. dealers," Webb writes, "were selling crack long before" Ricky Ross made contact with his ostensibly CIA-controlled cocaine suppliers. Stripped to the bare facts, Ross's success in the drug business comes off as old-fashioned criminal entrepreneurship, no contras or CIA handlers required.

Shaky though it is, Webb's story seems to confirm conspiracy theories already rampant in black neighborhoods and the media that circulate within them. Wilbert Tatum, editor of New York's best-known black newspaper, the *Amsterdam News*, says the "Dark Alliance" series comports perfectly with explanations he has been hearing for years about why the inner city is falling apart. Noriega, the Gulf War Syndrome, AIDS, the Million Man March—all are, in one way or another, evidence of a government plot to hurt black people, explains Tatum, who says he has recently been in touch with former comedian Dick Gregory on the subject. In light of this, Tatum says he considers the notion that the CIA sent cocaine into the ghetto "entirely plausible. It was already rumored that crack cocaine and heroin was a CIA deal." Who else but the federal government "has the wherewithal and the immunity to move through our borders and around

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our borders and get things into this country?" Tatum asks rhetorically.

Derrick Z. Jackson, a black columnist for the *Boston Globe*, is equally convinced by the Webb series. "The only conclusion is that Ronald Reagan said yes to crack and the destruction of black lives at home to fund the killing of Commies abroad," Jackson wrote in one of two September columns about the series. Black drug dealers, Jackson concluded, are "political prisoners, considering the government's role in placing the crack in their hands." Despite its at times overheated tone, even the *Mercury News* series never accused Ronald Reagan of deliberately conspiring to kill black people. How did Jackson reach such a conclusion? "Reagan's general attitude toward African Americans during his presidency certainly leaves him open to all kinds of possibilities," Jackson explained in an interview. "Conspiracies are very hard to prove in direct, hard, cold fact. But it seems to me that if you line up all the dots in sort of a dots kind of game, it seems pretty clear."

THE *MERCURY NEWS* IS HARDLY SUBTLE: ITS ILLUSTRATION SHOWS A MAN SMOKING CRACK SUPERIMPOSED ON THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE CIA.

Not all black journalists have been as clumsily blunt. The more savvy—like novelist Ishmael Reed, writing in the *Washington Post's* Outlook section recently—have taken up what might be called the Tawana Brawley defense: Maybe it didn't happen in this specific case, but things like this *do* happen. "I don't know if every word of Webb's story is true," Reed wrote, "but the weight of the evidence gives credence" to conspiracy theories prevalent in black America.

For all the attention "Dark Alliance" has received in the black press and on Capitol Hill, few major media outlets have validated the series by reporting on its charges in any detail. This apparent indifference clearly baffles Dawn Garcia, Gary Webb's editor on the stories. "The East Coast media is very East Coast-focused," explains Garcia, who is also the city editor of the *Mercury News*. "It may take a while for it to filter over there."

Or it may never filter at all. Many journalists outside of San Jose seem to have taken a skeptical view of Webb's story. As a senior foreign editor at one prestigious East Coast daily—one of the newspapers that have done their best to ignore the *Mercury News* series—put it: "More allegations from more drug dealers? The most important point in the story is the weakest point—it has a hollow core. It doesn't move me. I don't see anything to follow up."

Doyle McManus, the Washington bureau chief of the *Los Angeles Times*, says his paper is now looking into allegations raised by Webb. But McManus, who covered Central America in the 1980s, doesn't seem to think new facts will come to light. Most of the provable elements in the story, he points out, came out in print ten years ago. "When I saw these names, I thought, 'Gee, I've seen this before.'"

Meanwhile, Gary Webb has been doing his best over the past month to drum up attention for his series, appearing on television and talk radio around the country, evidently with the blessing of his employer. A *Mercury News* Internet site helpfully provides an updated list of Webb's radio and television appearances. Try to reach Webb at the newspaper's headquarters and a recording requests "your name or the name of your organization or show, channel, frequency, audience—including type and size—and date and time of the requested interview or appearance."

Webb has found a particularly receptive audience on the Joe Madison show, a lunchtime talk-radio program broadcast out of Washington on a 50,000-watt signal from West Virginia to Pennsylvania. Madison himself, a member of the national board of the NAACP, is not one to let a few missing facts stand in the way of a good conspiracy theory, and has become one of Webb's biggest supporters. Madison and Dick Gregory were recently arrested in front of CIA headquarters in Virginia while protesting "the fact that for over ten years the CIA shipped tons of cocaine into black areas of Southern California."

Madison says listeners have been transfixed by Webb's allegations, which he has discussed almost continuously since "Dark Alliance" first appeared. "Man, I've done this show for three hours a day, five days a week for four straight weeks, and my lines have been *filled*," he reports. "As a matter of fact, to show you how interested they are, one day two Fridays ago I changed subjects. And we received 50 calls at the station: What the hell was I doing? '*Do not stop talking about this*.'"

According to Madison, the *Mercury News* series didn't tell the whole story. It didn't need to—informed people can fill in the blanks. "I'm telling you that Gary Webb, myself, Dick Gregory, and a few other people that we're working with *know* that the CIA had knowledge that the contras were dealing in drugs," he says heatedly. "This is not a black story, any more than the Holocaust is a Jewish story. What we have here is an

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American tragedy." Black neighborhoods, he says, were targeted by the CIA simply because they were black neighborhoods. And why would the CIA want to hurt black people? Madison can hardly believe the question is meant seriously. "This is *America*," he explains, exasperated. "What can I say?" And with that, he says, "I've got to go. I've got Dick Gregory on the other line." ♦

The Courts, Gay Marriage, and the Popular Will

By David Frum

During the great debate over ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, Phyllis Schlafly used to cause sophisticated eyes to roll with her prediction that the amendment would inspire the courts to create a new right of gay marriage. It was just twenty years ago, but this warning then seemed so self-evidently ludicrous as to blast Schlafly's credibility among journalists and other respectable folk.

It turns out Schlafly was right. It's on grounds of sex discrimination, not discrimination against homosexuals, that the plaintiffs in *Baehr* v. *Lewin*, the now-famous case involving gay marriage in Hawaii, may win the right to wed. And it's because claims of sex discrimination are involved that the Defense of Marriage Act, which has passed both houses of Congress and is due to be signed by the president this week, may prove vulnerable.

As liberal as the Hawaiian courts are, even they refused to swallow the argument that a gay couple refused a marriage license had been discriminated against because they were homosexual. The Hawaiian Supreme Court's May decision in *Baehr* v. *Lewin* conceded that the local constitution could not be stretched as far as that. But, the court went on to chirrup, the constitution could be stretched in a different direction: Hawaii's practice of denying marriage licenses to men who want to marry men and women who want to marry women constituted *sex* discrimination. Sex discrimination is prohibited under the Hawaiian state constitution. And with that, the Hawaiian Supreme Court sent the case back to the trial courts to give the state an opportunity to justify this discrimination.

Other plaintiffs in other states have tried this argument but were rebuffed because state courts hesitated to read equal-rights clauses in their state constitutions about sex as literally as they read equal-rights clauses about race and religion. Judges have felt constrained to recognize what most sensible non-judges recognize: that sex is not analogous to race, that there are important differences between men and women the law must respect and honor. Most of us would be troubled if we learned that in traffic accidents between whites and nonwhites, the courts of our state found in favor of white drivers 95 percent of the time. But only a fanatic would be troubled to find that the local courts found for the mother in 95 percent of child-custody disputes.

Alas, American lawyers being what they are, it was only a matter of time before five such fanatics found themselves in control of a state supreme court somewhere. It happened to be Hawaii's. *Baehr* v. *Lewin* probably won't receive its final adjudication until 1998 or 1999. But everyone should prepare for the worst. The Hawaiian courts will subject the state's arguments to the standard of scrutiny that lawyers call "strict": strict in theory, the old dictum runs, but fatal in fact.

It was to insulate the other 49 states from the caprice of the Hawaiian judiciary that Congress adopted the Defense of Marriage Act.

It has become commonplace to argue that the Defense of Marriage Act violates the Constitution—specifically, the Full Faith and Credit clause, which appears in Article IV. Never before in the annals of American history has that clause been so cited; advocates of gay marriage claim that Article IV would require every state to accept the validity of a Hawaiian homosexual wedding. And because the Defense of Marriage Act authorizes states to deny the validity of that wedding, advocates of gay marriage contend that it is unconstitutional.

That argument is flimsy. Here's the clause in full:

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"Full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such acts, records, and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof." The language is clear: The Constitution does grant Congress plentiful authority over the mutual legal obligations of the states.

So the Defense of Marriage Act is safe from Article IV. But it is vulnerable nonetheless, because it arguably falls afoul of the Supreme Court's strict new interpretation of the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of sexual equality.

What a minute, you might wonder. What guarantee of sexual equality is that? Didn't the Equal Rights Amendment lose? Amazingly, the answer is—yes, it did, but that doesn't matter anymore. America's judges are not the sort of people to let a little thing like the defeat of a constitutional amendment stop them from radically reconstructing society.

In the mid-1970s, the Supreme Court decided to ignore the verdict of the ratifying process that denied the ERA a place in the Constitution. Instead, it began interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment as if ERA had prevailed. At first, in a ritual nod to constitutional politesse, the justices observed some caution. Plaintiffs who complained they had been denied the equal protection of the laws because of their sex would get a slightly cooler judicial reception than plaintiffs making a similar complaint about race. Sex became a new, "intermediate" category of scrutiny. But in practice, "intermediate" scrutiny soon proved indistinguishable from the "strict" scrutiny of race-discrimination cases.

AMERICA'S JUDGES ARE NOT THE SORT OF PEOPLE TO LET A LITTLE THING LIKE THE DEFEAT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT STOP THEM FROM RECONSTRUCTING SOCIETY.

And this spring, when it decided to mandate the gender integration of the Virginia Military Institute, the Supreme Court finally and frankly inscribed the rejected ERA into the Constitution. The court laid down the rule that in all but the most extreme instances, the law must refuse to take any notice of the differences between the sexes.

Taking notice of the difference between the sexes is, however, precisely what the Defense of Marriage Act is meant to do. So, sometime after 1998 or 1999, there will be a new court battle. Two men or two women married in Hawaii will seek to force another state to recognize their relationship. When that state cites the Defense of Marriage Act and resists, the act's constitutionality will be challenged. If Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg still commands a majority for the extreme understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment she displayed in the VMI case, the Defense of Marriage Act may well go down.

Especially since this Supreme Court seems to have quietly decided that sexual orientation is itself a category worthy of special attention, like race or—now—sex. It's hard to understand exactly what the court held in its murky and undisciplined ruling this year in *Romer* v. *Evans*, the Colorado gay-rights referendum case. At a minimum, though, the court has traveled a long way from *Bowers* v. *Hardwick*, the 1986 "sodomy" case that recognized the right of states to criminalize homosexual behavior. In *Romer* v. *Evans*, the court denied a state the right to exclude homosexuals from the special protection of its civil-rights laws.

The court's reasoning in *Romer* v. *Evans* bodes especially ill for the Defense of Marriage Act. The Colorado referendum, the Supreme Court said, was invalid because it was motivated by an "animus" against homosexuals. It offered no evidence of such animus; apparently the mere fact that homosexuals were the unique targets of the law proved it. And of course, homosexuals are the unique targets of the Defense of Marriage Act too.

Does this mean the defense of traditional marriage is doomed? Far from it—provided that Americans and their lawmakers are prepared to muster their resolve now. The great precedent here is the court's attempt to outlaw the death penalty in 1974. Over the following two years, more than thirty states rewrote their criminal laws in ways designed to satisfy the court's stated objections to the capital penalty. Confronted with a powerful national consensus, the Supreme Court backed down. And while it has never reconciled itself to the death penalty—while it and the lower federal courts still sabotage the penalty's application to the utmost of their ability—it has accepted the sentence's ultimate constitutionality.

And so here. American courts and law schools have been hugely influenced by the teachings of Ronald Dworkin, who has argued that the American Constitution should be interpreted in terms of "evolving standards of decency." Translate that to "cramming down the throat of a hostile public as much liberalism as possible short of impeachment." It's the job of state legislators and Congress to help the judiciary understand where that line will be drawn.

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The need to draw that line is why the Senate's close vote on the bill sponsored by Sen. Ted Kennedy to forbid employment discrimination against homosexuals—devised as an effort to derail or defang the Defense of Marriage Act and brought to a vote the same day—was so misguided.

True, the bill went down to defeat by a one-vote margin. But at a moment when the courts are trying to decide how much they can get away with, it was (to say the least) spectacularly unhelpful to the cause of marriage and the family for the Senate to send the courts so ambiguous a signal. Some senators, with their instinct for horse-trading, may have seen the Kennedy bill as a reasonable compromise—they could vote for the Defense of Marriage Act *and* the Kennedy bill and thus appear broad-minded. But courts don't operate by horse-trading; courts operate by taking principles to their logical (or, nowadays, their most extreme possible) conclusion.

That's what has happened north of the border. Inspired by the same sympathetic motives as the 49 senators who voted in favor of the Kennedy anti-discrimination bill, eight of the ten Canadian provinces gave homosexuals the benefit of their anti-discrimination statutes in the 1980s. Since then, Canadian courts—who are even more impressed with the output of America's radical law professors than U.S. courts—have gone to work, Dworkin-style, fabricating something extraordinarily close to gay marriage. Governments are obliged to pay pensions, relocation expenses, and other benefits to the "partners" of homosexual civil servants; homosexuals may sue each other for support after their relationships dissolve; they may adopt each other's biological children; and they may even adopt children as couples. And whenever a government objects (usually pretty insincerely) to the latest innovation, the courts cite the jurisdiction's own human-rights statutes for justification.

States and Congress need to begin now making unmistakably clear the seriousness of their commitment to marriage and the family. Sixteen legislatures have already affirmed their commitment to the traditional understanding of marriage; pressure should be brought on the remaining states to do the same. Hawaiians may need to amend their constitution.

In extremis, states may even want to consider one final, distasteful expedient: reaffirming or re-enacting sodomy laws. In the best spirit of tolerance, half the states repealed their sodomy laws in the early 1970s, and the other half stopped enforcing them. That was the right thing to do: These laws not only invade precious rights of personal privacy, they confer dangerously arbitrary powers on the police as well.

But the fact is, these laws remain constitutional. And—should the courts ever make it necessary—they can serve as a legal weapon of last resort. First, in a state with a sodomy law, gay marriage could not be legally consummated. Second, a state with a sodomy law can, if challenged in court to defend its "sex discrimination" in a gay-marriage case, do what Colorado and Hawaii could not in defending their "discriminatory" legislation: cite a compelling state law-enforcement interest, the prevention of a criminal act. Third, and most serious, the reaffirmation by states of a sodomy law would signal the courts that their attack on marriage risks triggering a legal convulsion even grimmer than that touched off by the decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*.

Americans are a tolerant people. The overwhelming majority generously upholds the good old principle of live and let live. In recent years, homosexuals have asked for better police protection, hundreds of millions of dollars for AIDS research, equal treatment in the workplace, and an end to the sneering spirit of cruelty in which their condition was too often discussed in the past. And by and large their requests have been granted. Millions of Americans already cheerfully accept that their homosexual friends enter into romantic relationships, and wish them nothing but happiness. To an unprecedented degree, Americans give the most generous possible answer to E.M. Forster's haunting question: Is there so much love in the world that you want to deny anyone any portion of it? And in giving that generous answer, they have helped to form a more generous country.

But Americans are also deeply attached, as they should be, to the fundamental institutions of Judeo-Christian civilization. They are living in the third decade of a crime and welfare crisis largely attributable to the collapse of marriage. They are coming to appreciate the damaging consequences of casual divorce to two generations of children. They sense, if they do not understand, that marriage is an institution that rests on a recognition of the cultural and biological differences between men and women, and that the call for gay marriage is the culmination of the intellectual and political campaign to deny and suppress those differences. They feel—they are right to feel—anger and outrage when it's proposed to them to abolish marriage and replace it with a new unisex partnerhood, casually entered into and as casually dissolved.

And the sooner and more bluntly the people's representatives confront the courts with the power and permanence of those feelings, the more likely it is that American society will be spared a destructive and unnecessary conflict. ♦

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Doing the Reinhold Niebuhr Twist

A Reflection on Editors, Editing, and the Literary Life

By Joseph Epstein

The first and probably ineradicable cliché about editors is that they are frustrated writers. There's something to it, but only in the sense that T.S. Eliot—himself both a writer and an editor—put it: "Most editors are failed writers—but so are most writers." As someone who has worked most of his life simultaneously as an editor and writer, and who has also put in his time as an Anglophile, I can only add, "Just so, Tom. Spot on."

A writing career of any length is, in essence, a series of relationships with various editors. One may talk about an audience for one's writing as long as one wishes, but the primary audience for just about everything I have ever written has been one or another of the editors I have dealt with over the years—those who have edited my articles for magazines and those who have edited my books. These men and women have run the gamut from old sweet softies to cold sardonic swine. Some have praised my work extravagantly; others have criticized it strongly even when accepting it. Some have shown the most elegant manners; others clearly feel the least show of consideration to be an act of abject weakness. I just wrote a piece for a small-circulation magazine from whose editor I have yet to hear anything; but then perhaps I shouldn't have expected to hear, since I wrote the piece without fee.

No one sets out in life to become an editor; it is a job one falls, or slides, or lapses into. In my own case, I knew from a fairly early age I wanted to write; my only problem was that I hadn't anything in particular to write about, which didn't stop me from beginning to publish at the age of 22. While awaiting content, I worked on style, and thought perhaps the best place to do this was on a magazine as an editor. I was lucky, I now think, to get a job on a magazine called the *New Leader*, which in those days, the early '60s, required lots of editing.

Most of the pieces in the magazine were about politics, many about politics in foreign countries. Those written by Englishmen, some of which came in longhand, needed the least work. We ran lots of material by Kremlinologists, who were dedicated to discerning, usually on the most amazingly slender evidence, what went on behind the thick walls of the Kremlin. Many of these men were themselves Russians, and their English prose tended to be Pninish, but without the laughs. A number of refugees from World War II, whose first language was German, also wrote for us. They could produce some fairly gnarled copy. I regularly rewrote the single-page column of an elderly socialist named William Bohn. He never complained. If I am still scribbling away at his age—I would estimate early nineties—and some kid in his twenties does that to me, I shall threaten legal action.

Although I thought of myself as a back-of-the-book man, interested in books and the arts, the staff on the *New Leader* wasn't large enough to allow for such specialization. We were a threesome, a principal editor and two associate editors. The copy would come in, and we would have a go at it. The metaphor of butchery comes to mind. ("Yours, sir, is the butcher's trade," wrote Henry James to Bruce Richmond, his editor at the *Times Literary Supplement*, when Richmond wanted to cut a small portion of a James essay.) Each manuscript laid on my desk was a carcass, to be stripped of its fat and gristle and made, somehow, sufficiently presentable for the somewhat less than lustrous showcase in which it would eventually appear.

For prose that took on the complexity but none of the style of late rococo, the prize went to the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who used the *New Leader* as a forum to comment on world affairs. Niebuhr was a genuinely great man, but sometime in the early 1960s he had had a stroke, which deprived him of the use of I don't know what parts of his body but of the space bar on his typewriter certainly. Every sentence seemed a multiple-choice question to which the answer, inevitably, was none of the above.

I remember sentences that ran along something like the following lines:

> Whether the Kennedy administration wishes to stage a three-pronged attack on the double revolution of poverty and underdevelopment or instead place the weight of its focus on arms control, with especial attention to underground testing and the attendant so-called "nth-country problem," or take a strong

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> stance on the bifurcation inherent in the Commonwealth or Common Market question, all the while refraining from direct confrontation with the civil rights movement in its more militant aspect, remains to be seen.

Now imagine this sentence with no space between every second or third word.

As the youngest editor in the office, I was regularly assigned the Niebuhr pieces. It was an initiation ritual. At the *New Republic* of those days, I am told, they would give the newest editor the task of calling up a journalist named Gerald Johnson to go over his galley proof, neglecting to tell the young fellow that Johnson was very nearly deaf. Everyone else in the office would sit around, suppressing laughter as the poor guy soon found himself screaming proof changes into the phone. It might take me the better part of a day to unravel and then restitch Niebuhr's words. The best part of the assignment was at the very beginning, when I would stand at my desk over his copy, remove my suit jacket, loosen my tie, and sing, à la Chubby Checker, "C'mon, Reiny, let's do the twist."

On this job I learned that I had a small knack for bullying other people's sentences into presentable shape. I edited the copy of the literary critic Stanley Edgar Hyman and the social critic Irving Kristol, neither of whom, to my mild resentment, had the least need for my ministrations. But in pulling apart and reassembling lesser articles and reviews, I think I discovered a thing or two about how brief compositions—"pieces," to use the trade term—work, or, more often, don't.

I discovered all the crutches that limping prose needs to get from paragraph to paragraph. While doing so I longed to write a composition that never had recourse to the words *yet*, *but*, *still*, *however*, and *moreover*; also the phrases *to be sure*, *what is more*, and *in any event*. Thirty years later, I haven't written it yet.

I took most pleasure in editing Albert Goldman, who then wrote about jazz and classical music for the *New Leader*. In the strange detours life provides, Goldman went from teaching the Romantics at the School of General Studies at Columbia—"working the lounge at Columbia," he used to call it—to writing thick books about such popular-culture figures as Lenny Bruce, Elvis, and John Lennon, that last tome causing him to be called "human vermin" by Elton John, an amusing if not entirely enviable accolade.

Al was a very psychoanalytic character, and at that time he viewed editing as therapy by other (much less expensive) means. I edited a book for him that he wrote about De Quincey and plagiarism. Sometimes I would meet him at his apartment to talk him through a piece on which he felt blocked (in those days, editors made house calls). One Saturday morning, he called to ask me what kind of typewriter I used. When I told him, he wanted more details, until it became clear that what he really wanted was for me to take him to buy a new typewriter. "Al," I said, "I think this may be a bit sicker than we want to let things get."

"Isn't it, though," he said, loosing his fine cackly laugh.

Toward the end of my days at the *New Leader*, I wrote my first review for the *New Republic*. It was about a small-press edition of the verse of Max Beerbohm, written at the request of the journal's literary editor, Robert Evett. It was not a long review, but Beerbohm, himself so meticulous a craftsman, is a writer I love, and so I took great pains with it. Prying open the thickly packed *New Republic* envelope in which I expected to find galley proofs, I found instead my own typescript, with large sections contemptuously rubbed out with a thick and smudge-making pencil. Long wavy lines connected sentences that, logically, resisted juxtaposition. Transitions were eliminated. The notion of a paragraph as both rhythmically and intellectually coherent was completely undone. Any gracefulness, elegance, wit that the original review might have contained was brutally eliminated. I felt quite as devastated as my review.

"Mr. Evett," I said, "I'm afraid that I can't let this piece appear in print as it has been edited. It doesn't make any sense."

"Don't worry about it," he said, "Gilbert [Harrison, the editor-in-chief at the time] edited it. His wife died not long ago, so he drinks his lunch, comes back and edits copy, with the results you've just seen. All you have to do is tell me you want everything restored, and I'll do it."

"I want everything restored," I said.

"I just did it," he said.

This happened just once more, with the same second act: "I want everything restored." "I just did it."

I came to like Robert Evett, whom I called Bobby. He was a convert to Catholicism, a homosexual, a man with drinking and pill problems, and, withal, a sweetheart. He gave me all sorts of books to review, at a time when I needed the money; his telephone conversations were filled with rich gossip and lots of shared laughter; and once, when he heard from someone else that I was onto financially lean days, he offered to loan me money, which I didn't take, though I was much touched by the offer.

Bobby's true vocation was that of a composer of serious music, for which he received a great many commissions. He mentioned this part—the main part, really—of his career to me only in passing. Sometimes, the shakiness of his life, when it was going badly, was unmistakable: too much drink, trouble with his gentleman friend,

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difficulties at the office, medical worries, the full catastrophe.

I was going to say that I awaited Bobby's calls with pleasure, but the pleasure was usually admixed, however slightly, with anxiety. For a call from Bobby meant, above all, a judgment on the piece I had recently sent him. He never rejected anything that I wrote for him, at least not that I can recall, nor did he go in for much in the way of making changes in my copy, but neither of these facts stood in the way of my being nervous about his acceptance. After having published my writing for more than 35 years, I regret to have to confess that I am still nervous about acceptance. "Perhaps worry is always tapping on the door of the true artist," wrote Gerald Moore. I would only add that it's there for the working writer, too.

The other side of being nervous about acceptance is that of being excessively susceptible to praise, or Vitamin P, as Thomas Mann referred to it. I have had many handsome injections of Vitamin P and have never come close to overdosing, but the man who used to lay it on most thickly for me, not with a trowel but a bulldozer, was an editor for whom I used to write articles on American writers for the United States Information Agency. So heavy was his praise that even I, with my swollen writer's vanity, felt embarrassed by it—which isn't, please note, quite the same as saying I couldn't believe it. One day I told him that I had come up with a way to eliminate his having to praise my work any further. All he had to do was write me a letter, on USIA stationery, in which he thanked me for my writing and told me that he thought it was a force for change in Latin America. Since at that time—1969—nothing was a force for change in Latin America, I thought this was sufficient praise. He wrote the letter, but I, alas, have lost it.

Some magazines edit more heavily than others. As an editor, I have gone in for some fairly heavy editing myself, even performing what, in the pre-computer age, used to be called a "typewriter job," which meant putting a fresh piece of paper in one's typewriter and simply rewriting an entire article. Eliot Cohen, the founding editor of *Commentary*, is said to have gone in for heavy editing in a big way, and the tradition of serious editing has continued at that magazine to the present.

Sometimes the results of this heavy editing can lead to odd deceptions. One cannot be certain if one is reading the writer or the editor. I remember, in the late '60s, reading brilliant articles in *Commentary* on the civil rights movement by Bayard Rustin, and thinking how extraordinary it was that this man could organize impressive marches on Washington and still find the time to write so beautifully. In fact, as I subsequently learned, the ideas in the articles were Rustin's but the sentences in which they were set afloat were those of Norman Podhoretz, the magazine's editor. On the other hand, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, as I can vouch from having edited him, is both an important U.S. senator and an impressive prose writer.

THE OTHER SIDE OF BEING NERVOUS ABOUT ACCEPTANCE IS THAT OF BEING EXCESSIVELY SUSCEPTIBLE TO PRAISE—VITAMIN P, AS MANN CALLED IT.

I have received some splendid editing in my day, from the *New Yorker*, from the *Hudson Review*, from the *New Criterion*, but above all from *Commentary*, where Neal Kozodoy has been my editor. Kozodoy has a nice sense for the flow of argument in a piece, and he has, in many instances, untwisted my own logic. He is also excellent at sniffing out inconsistencies, overwriting, small but key flaws in short stories. He has saved me the embarrassment of many solecisms, factual faux pas, grand blunders of my own devising.

Neal Kozodoy is a big cut-man, a founding member of the less-is-more school, known to many of his clients as "the Butcher of 56th Street," though I prefer to think of him as "Cleaver," as in "Leave It to Cleaver," which I seem frequently to have done by sending him manuscripts longer than he wished them. On the last piece I wrote for him, I sent him, via e-mail, the following communication: "Dear Neal, Wrote five fine paragraphs of Solzhenitsyn piece yesterday, four of which you should be able to remove easily."

One of the saddest lessons any writer has to learn is that anything he writes can be cut and that, worse news, the writing is often—not always but more often than not—better for being briefer. The Gettysburg Address is 272 words long; with an editor's help, I'm sure Lincoln could have brought it in at under 200. I have never counted the number of words in the Lord's Prayer, but it, too, could, I'm sure, be readily cut; its second phrase, "who art in heaven," is pretty clearly tautological; I mean, where else would the Lord be, in Passaic?

Kozodoy's cuts can be more than editorial. In a short story I once wrote for *Commentary*, my narrator has written a *New Yorker* profile of a writer that runs to 60,000 words; Neal cut that down to 40,000. In an essay I sent him about the days I lived in Little Rock, I mentioned that someone had sent me a letter saying I was still considered a small legend in that city, to which I

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responded, "At 5′ 7″, I suppose I am a small legend"; he made it *at under* 5′ 7″, so he has cut not only my manuscripts but my actual height. Now that's editing.

I have neglected to add that I think Neal Kozodoy one of the very best editors going, and the one whom, because of my regard for his acumen and his strong anti-crapola radar, it gives me the greatest delight to please. He, of course, would have cut this entire paragraph.

Of all the invitations to write for magazines I have ever received, the most amusing, in connection with editing, came from a man, now dead, named Ronald Sanders, who was then the editor of *Midstream*. He suggested a piece he wanted me to write, then added: "I don't know whether you get a lot of editing at *Commentary*, *Harper's*, and other places that you write, but I can promise you that you won't have to worry about any editing at *Midstream*. It's not that we don't believe in the value of editing—it's just that we're too tired to do any."

Editors can also function usefully as goad and conscience, especially to those of us who are used to writing for deadlines—that is to say, for those of us used to missing deadlines. As a magazine writer and editor, I have been given and myself continue to give any number of false deadlines. I think of deadlines as coming in three kinds: the first deadline, the adult deadline, and the *real* deadline. I generally make the *real* deadline and half-feel I ought to be paid a bonus for making the first deadline.

The advent of fax, Fed-Ex, e-mail has made the deadline-making aspect of writing even goofier. Now one can wait for the very last moment—and still miss the deadline. As a writer, I have not missed many, but enough to diminish my own moral authority as an editor able to chastise other writers for missing theirs. I am not sure that I need deadlines, but I do think that they have made me more productive, since I am the sort of writer who functions best under those delightful twins of self-laceration, guilt and shame.

I once had a piece owed to me at the magazine I edit, the *American Scholar*, for fully seventeen years. When it finally came in, it was not, truth to tell, all that great. But I was not about to send it back to its author for revisions. The wildest excuse by a writer for missing a deadline that I have ever heard was made by the late Anatole Broyard, and was told to me by Hilton Kramer, who was then briefly working as cultural news editor on the *New York Times* and was the editor to whom the excuse was given. Broyard called in one day to tell Kramer that he wouldn't be able to have his regular book review in on time because his wife was having her period. Kramer was so flabbergasted by the non-sequitorial quality of this excuse that he said okay and hung up, quite neglecting to ask what the hell Broyard's wife's menstrual cycle had to do with it.

In my experience, many of the best manuscript editors are not themselves writers; or, if they do write, they do so only occasionally and probably do not think of themselves primarily as writers. William Shawn of the *New Yorker* was consummately such an editor. Nonwriting editors tend to be more selfless. You never sense any rivalrousness in them, or the feeling that they are like frustrated actors, waiting tables and hanging around until they are cast in a good part. As a writing editor myself, I know whereof I speak.

The same is true in book publishing, where the steadiest editors—Maxwell Perkins, Robert Giroux, Elizabeth Sifton—do not generally produce books of their own. From a writer's standpoint, steadiness is much valued, and not all that often found, in a book editor. Hemingway left three wives but never left Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Scribners.

Nowadays the powerful editors have their own imprints, a sign of the editor's growing importance to the world of publishing. But how, exactly, did book editors come into being at all? Initially, an author wrote for his bookseller; and as every less-than-bestselling present-day writer will be only too eager to tell you, no contemporary writer would confuse his publisher with a bookseller. In the 18th century, a bookseller would decide how much to pay a writer, he would decide how many copies to print, and he might have to decide whether to bowdlerize material. But my sense is that the notion of an editor getting in there and making serious alterations in books belongs to our century. William C. Brownell, the principal editor at Scribners before Maxwell Perkins, noted: "I don't believe much in tinkering, and I am not *suffisant* enough to think the publisher can contribute much by modifications." The editor was still nothing like the fellow worker, companion in creation, combination buddy-shrink-critic-tough-father-kindly-mother that is implied in the following dedication of *Of Time and the River* from Thomas Wolfe to Perkins:

> [To] a great editor and a brave and honest man, who stuck to the writer of this book through times of bitter hopelessness and doubt and would not let him give in to his own despair, a work to be known as "Of Time and the River" is dedicated with the hope that all of it may be in some way worthy of the loyal devotion and the patient care which a dauntless and unshaken friend has given to each part of it, and without which none of it could have been done.

If this seems a bit fulsome, perhaps you should know that Perkins felt, rightly, he had to cut the dedication back from its original length of three pages.

I worked for roughly a year as an

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editor of books and found I had neither the temperament nor the taste for it. I didn't have the patience to await the fruition of long-term projects, and I didn't have the appetite for simultaneously stroking the egos of writers and stoking the greed of publishers. The job felt altogether too much that of a middleman between writer and publisher, and I quickly grew tired of lying to each about the admirable intentions of the other.

Apart from collections of essays and stories, I have written only two full-blown books, and in both the help of an editor would have been appreciated, at least at that midway point where one is certain that the whole project has been a very big mistake. I had as an editor for one-and-a-half of these books—the reason for the fraction will become clear presently—an extraordinary man named Hal Scharlatt. He was one of the hot young editors of the day, a likable, talented, wildly undependable man who died on a tennis court at the age of 38, in the middle of a set and—the nerve!—in the middle of my second book.

Hal Scharlatt was one of those editors who answered neither letters nor most phone calls. If you sent him a chunk of manuscript, he might deign to comment on it, but then again he might not. Once I was to meet him in Chicago for lunch, for which he showed up 45 minutes late, just five minutes before I was set to walk out, tear up my contract, look for another editor, publisher, book idea. It took him a minute to calm me down, and only two more to charm the socks and shin hair off me.

None of this would have worked, of course, if Hal Scharlatt hadn't been very good at what he did. What he did was two things. The first was to create a certain amount of excitement for a book even before it was written. Not long after I signed up to write my first book for him, I got a call from a producer at NBC, telling me that he heard I was writing this fascinating book and would I like to come on a prime-time show to discuss my subject? Where could he have gotten this idea? Only, somehow, from a grapevine Hal Scharlatt had planted.

The other thing Scharlatt was good at was judging the pace of a book-length manuscript. I don't think he touched a sentence in the one complete book I wrote for him, but he was able, at various places, to point out that "things seemed to slow down badly at this point—I'd cut the next twenty pages by roughly a third." His instinct in these matters was excellent, and I found myself following his suggestions to good effect.

GENIUS EDITORS CAN BE VERY TRYING. GIVEN A CHOICE, I'D RATHER HAVE AN EDITOR WHO CATCHES ME USING A DASH BADLY ON PAGE 279.

Yet having these genius editors can be very trying. Given a choice, I'd rather have an editor who catches me using a dash badly on page 279 and feels that I have not used the word egoist with quite the precision it requires.

But if book editors are a relatively new phenomenon, the notion of an editor fiddling with magazine copy is older than one may have thought. Francis Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review,* not only chose the topics and contributors for his distinguished journal but got in there to muck around with their pieces when it pleased him to do so. Jeffrey was not above laying about with his blue pencil, cleaning up the extravagances and what he felt were the barbarities in the prose of William Hazlitt, writing in paragraphs, even entire pages he felt were wanting in other contributors. Jeffrey was a great editor and able to get away with it. Yet I'm glad Jeffrey didn't get his hands on everyone. One of the appropriate criticisms of an over-edited magazine is that nearly everything in it reads alike.

What would he, or another Jeffrey-like editor, have done, two and a half centuries earlier, with Montaigne, who wrote: "I go out of my way, but rather by licence than carelessness. My ideas follow one another, but sometimes it is from a distance, and look back at each other, but with a sidelong glance. . . . It is the inattentive reader who loses my subject, not I."

I tend to prefer the idiosyncratic in style to survive and flourish, even at the cost of irregularity and even, on occasion, barbarity. Yet in practice, I have tended to be an editor of the hands-on sort. I find I can't bear to have certain words, phrases, even syntax in any magazine I edit. I go prowling around other people's prose, unsplitting those split infinitives, sweeping prepositions from the ends of sentences, removing certain over- and ignorantly used words. I have conducted search-and-destroy campaigns against "lifestyle," "impact," "process," the pretentious "intriguing." Just now I am quite nuts on the matter of "focus," a word that shows up in journalism more frequently than Jesse Jackson at the funerals of the famous. I also don't permit ideas, movements, or anything except people in a car to be "driven," nor anything other than large physical objects to be "massive." I have scores of other tics, quirks, and downright prejudices. I can't help myself; I have to clean it all up. Anality, you may say. Anality, I respond, along with a character in an English novel, my ass.

I once thought that a magazine is

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all the power an intellectual needs; today, I would say it is all the power he deserves. The power derives from the opportunity to influence public opinion. Examples of its having been done, and on a monumental scale, are not wanting. The great 19th-century Russian exile Alexander Herzen's *The Bell*, published in London, is said to have had a strong hand in the breakup of serfdom. Solzhenitsyn's dealings with Alexander Tvardovsky, the editor of *Novy Mir* who determined to print *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, was fraught with even greater historical implications—namely, the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. Dwight Macdonald used to claim that his review in the *New Yorker* of Michael Harrington's book on poverty helped start the anti-poverty program in the United States. Jeane Kirkpatrick got her job as ambassador to the United Nations owing to an essay in *Commentary*.

But the great editors have had in common, I believe, their own odd, individual aesthetic, the notion of this elegant, this glittering, this lovely thing, a magazine, with every word written as one would like to write oneself: pellucidly, powerfully, penetratingly. It's a splendid dream, and as an editor I continue to have it myself, usually only to wake, pencil in my hand, ready once more, without Reinhold Niebuhr as my partner, to do perhaps my ten thousandth version of the editorial twist. ♦

Architecture

SKYSCRAPER LUST

By David Gelernter

You will be shocked to learn that architecture critic Paul Goldberger of the *New York Times* does *not* believe New York City ought to pine for its long-lost world's-tallest-building title. But it's lucky the Empire State Building wasn't constructed the way his argument is, or it would have collapsed into rubble the first time a pigeon sat on it. You might conclude from Goldberger's article in the August 4 *Times* that he knows nothing about tall buildings—but in fact he knows plenty, and wrote a fine book on the topic. Nevertheless, his piece is representative, because you would be hard-pressed to find a critic anywhere in the country who thinks that the world's tallest building is a thing worth having. And when the Establishment is unanimous, it's a sure sign of trouble.

The world's tallest building (1,500-odd ft.) is today nearing completion in Kuala Lumpur, and other Asian skyscrapers will go even higher soon—which sets Goldberger thinking. World's-tallest-structure lust is symptomatic, he writes, of "cultures that are in the first flush of excitement at moving onto the world stage"; of a "rising culture" that has reached a particular moment that "comes after beginnings and before maturity."

Thus Beauvais cathedral, built in the 13th century, was "a brazen attempt by height-obsessed French builders to erect the world's tallest tower (157 feet)." Actually, 157 feet was the height of the nave, not the tower over the crossing; the tower was 501 feet. But in any case Beauvais contradicts Goldberger's thesis. When work on Beauvais began, French Gothic culture was risen rather than rising; Notre Dame, Chartres, Amiens were largely finished; "Gothic art," writes Louis Grodecki, "had reached and even passed its zenith."

Today's Asian skyscrapers, Goldberger writes, "emerge more out of an international design language than out of anything specific to their place." Fair enough. But when he goes on to assert that "the same could once have been said of the Eiffel Tower" he is wrong again. Eiffel's tower was certainly *intended* to feel French; it was put up on the occasion of the 1889 Exposition celebrating the centennial of the Revolution. "It will show," Eiffel said, "that we are not simply an amusing people, but also the country of engineers and builders who are called upon all over the world to construct bridges, viaducts, train stations and the great monuments of modern industry." And surely Goldberger doesn't hold that late 19th-century France was a culture in its "first flush of excitement at moving onto the world stage."

At last we reach "that greatest of all symbols, the Empire State Building"—which turns out to be, as Goldberger sees it, yet another specimen of "international design language" versus buildings that incorporate "anything specific to their place." It's true that the Empire State has the quality of quintessentiality, of not having been invented so much as discovered at long last, like a law of physics—*the* skyscraper. And as such it transcends time and place. Yet as Goldberger himself wrote of this building in his book *The Skyscraper*, "it was startling, but somehow not all that surprising." How surprising could it be, given the extent to which it was shaped by New York City's 1916 stepback zoning law? Given other New York landmarks and visions of the time—the Chanin Building, Hood's Daily News Building,

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Hugh Ferriss's luminous brooding skyscraper drawings? People saw the Empire State as pure essence of Manhattan from the start.

Tall buildings do not reflect brazen, adolescent cultures-on-the-make. They emerge in fact (or did traditionally) out of eminently *mature* cultures flaunting their wealth, technology, design genius, and sheer radiant self-confidence. America no longer wants them, that's for sure, or at least her spokesmen don't. But that is not because we are too mature but because we are too passive and tired.

The pronouncements of today's cultural Establishment are based implicitly on a list of axioms. "The sexes are for all practical purposes interchangeable," for example. "One culture is as good as another." "Having a career is morally preferable to being a homemaker." "Humans have an absolute duty to preserve every species in its natural habitat." Ask an Establishmentarian to defend one of these axioms and you will draw a blank, because the implicit ground rules stipulate that they don't *have* to be defended; they are self-evident. Today's list derives ultimately from the proposition that race prejudice is wrong, which really *is* axiomatic and self-evident. Believing in that original axiom made intellectuals feel so warm and good they generated a whole raft more, and here we are.

The Axioms List is the most important document of our culture. It underpins the *New York Times* and (more important) every mainstream TV show and Hollywood film and university and teacher's college, every textbook and children's story book. No thoughtful liberal would deny that the list exists, and you might even get such a person to sit down with a conservative counterpart and agree on the list's contents (if not its meaning). To write these axioms down and publish them in *TV Guide* and a million other places would be a great thing; would give the public a clear picture, finally, of what the culture war is about.

That we are culturally more mature and sophisticated than old-time America (before the late 1960s) is an Establishment Axiom, and an especially important one. The evidence on the whole decisively contradicts it. But Goldberger relies on it in his piece. I don't believe we are more mature than skyscraper-age America; we do lack the sheer brute energy that went into a building like the Empire State. The whole project took twenty-one months, from site acquisition to the tenants' moving in. And no doubt we would never have approved the project in the first place, if only because putting up the Empire State meant tearing down the old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

INTELLECTUALS HAVE ALWAYS TENDED TO MISS THE POINT OF TALL BUILDINGS. IF YOU'RE NOT THRILLED, YOU'RE NOT THRILLED.

Goldberger would agree, I assume, that we are a "post-modern" culture. I have news for him: We are post-mature also. And we are a nation of sourpusses. Because we are a crotchety-old-man society, we find the exuberance of skyscraper builders incomprehensible and damned annoying. The sourpuss element has *always* been big on the U.S. scene, no question; intellectuals have always tended to miss the point of tall buildings. The urbanologist Lewis Mumford thought the Empire State's 200-foot mooring mast was ridiculous, "a public comfort station for migratory birds." Raymond Hood unlike Mumford was a great architect and he set things straight: the mooring mast, he said, was "a thrilling feature." But if you're not thrilled, you're not thrilled; not a thing to be done about it. Nowadays the Mumfords beat the Hoods every time.

I'll admit there are items I would sooner Manhattan acquire than a new world's-tallest building. I would like to realize the old modernist fantasy of using (just a bit of) the space *between* the skyscrapers—to amble around the sky on spider-webby bridges or ride an 80th-story cable-car. As a warm-up, would like to see some of the city's flatter, higher roofs better used. Would like to visit a museum or amphitheater under a glass shed (and see a concert against lit-up spires under a glass roof and gentle snowfall). Would like to visit a gigantic aviary or ride the world's biggest Ferris wheel on a rooftop.

We don't have it in us to do this sort of thing, but the wheel will turn and, who knows? The next generation might. Meanwhile, I'll tell you something, Mr. Goldberger, in strictest confidence, critic to critic: The degree to which the New York City public retains that old-time skyscraper lust is, my guess would be, 100 percent. Critics, big shots, sophisticates, and "activists" are repelled by world's-tallest-building talk, and, faced with this unified front, the man in the street goes along, for the record. But if Donald Trump had succeeded in putting the world's number-one skyscraper back in Manhattan where it belongs (he tried in the late 1980s and was beaten back by community activists), the public would have been thrilled. Opening day would have seen the public celebration of the decade. All the sourpuss harrumphing in the world wouldn't have wiped the smile off the city's face. ♦

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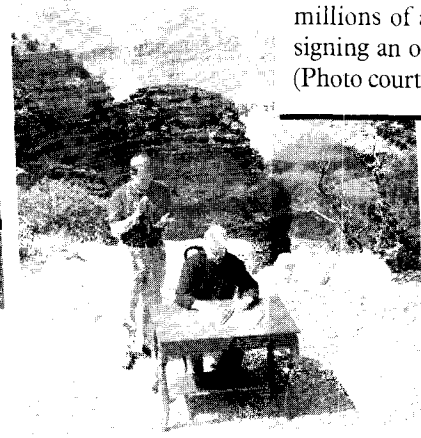
Parody



Sept. 16, 1996—Bill Clinton takes action that will put millions of acres of the West under federal control by signing an order at a desk in front of the Grand Canyon (Photo courtesy AP).

Sept. 16, 1997—Bill Clinton signs a piece of legislation taking over the Eiffel Tower (Courtesy Adobe Photoshop).

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STATES RIGHTS—WHO CARES?

What a great idea! It's just what every American has longed for: Another federal agency soaking up taxpayer dollars to perform a function better managed at the state level!

Yet that is what's happening in Washington. Financial services reform is in jeopardy in Congress because of a fight over the states' rights to regulate insurance. Currently, 10,000 state officials regulate insurance. Insurance regulation is—and has been for over 200 years—the responsibility of states.

A power grab by a federal bureaucracy—the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC)—is threatening to stamp out state authority to regulate insurance and to issue a license to all people who sell insurance, including those employed by national banks.

Unless this states' right is protected, the day will soon come when Congress will be forced to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to oversee the $488 billion insurance industry—the largest industry exclusively regulated by the states.

It doesn't make sense in this era of returning power to the states to allow the Comptroller—an unelected regulator—to cancel state insurance regulation and force Congress to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to fill the void. The American people don't want or need another federal bureaucracy!

Congress can preserve this states' right by supporting a provision in a pending House financial services reform bill (H.R. 1858) that reaffirms and keeps insurance oversight power in the states' hands.

WHO CARES ABOUT STATES RIGHTS? WE DO AND SO DO CONSUMERS!

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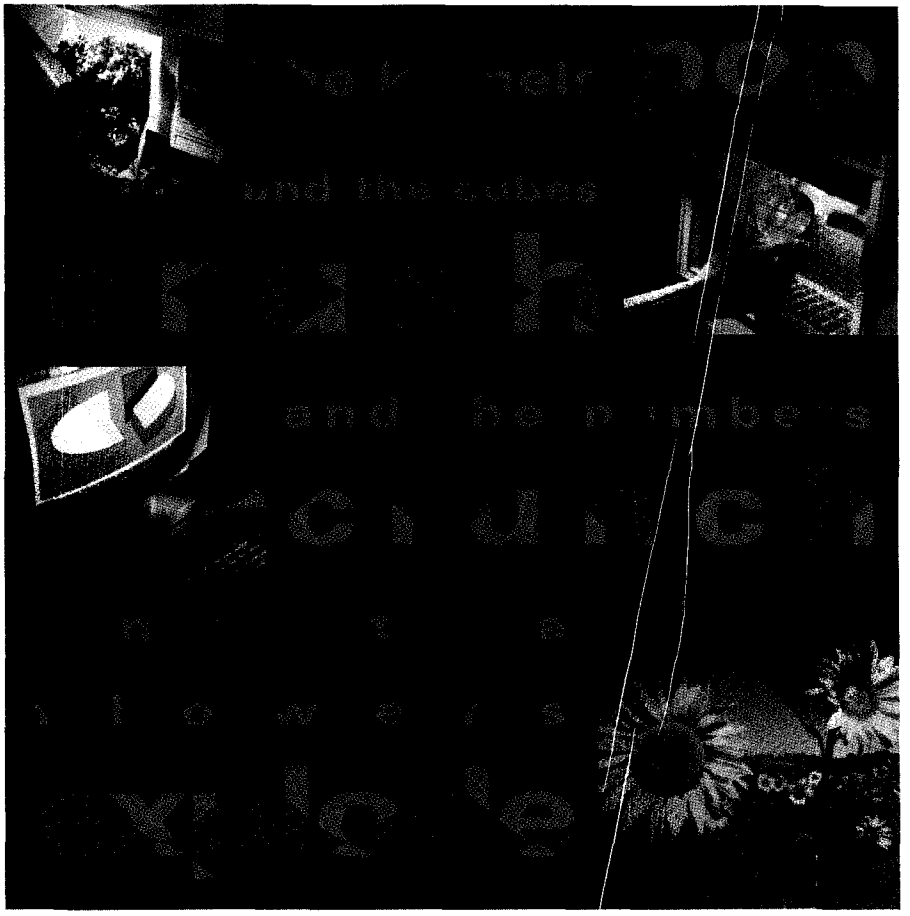

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Electricity

The power to make life better

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